SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE

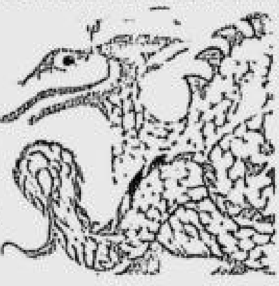
NEW WORD ORDER from January to December 2006, direct from the mouths of not mere babes but from Cory Aquino to GMA to Erap Estrada to Imelda Marcos to Manny Pacquiao to Rustom Padilla to the Vatican

SUNDAY BIZ /B1

Cop takes time out to smell the flowers and become one of the AFP's best entrepreneurs

LIFESTYLE /C1

Zodiac icons painted by Gilda Cordero-Fernando guided by artist souls like Onib, Kiukok, HR, Klimt and Michaelangelo



WELCOME the Year of the Pig with lotsa' fun without pigging out. JOAN BONDOC

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Sunday, December 31, 2006 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 23 P18 website: inquirer.net

Puno: DILG moved Smith late night to avoid traffic

By Norman Bordadora

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO yesterday said it was his office that decided to hand over American Marine Daniel Smith to US custody and this was in line with a Malacañang decision to comply with treaty obligations, to which President Macapagal-Arroyo agreed "in principle."

Puno and Interior Undersecretary for Public Safety Marius Corpus said that the transfer pushed through late in the night to avoid security complications in case the convoy bearing Smith had to go through heavy traffic between the central business district in Makati and the US Embassy compound in Manila.

"We wanted to reduce security threats from traffic problems. Also, it took some time to do the bilateral, operational and diplomatic coordination which started in

PUNO/ A6

'A stab in the back by GMA'

By Tarra V. Quismundo
Norman Bordadora
and Cynthia Balana

ARROGANT TREACHERY. AN UTTERLY shameless act by people who are like "thieves in the night."

A raw deal against the Filipino people. A stab in the back by no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo.

These were some of the virulent reactions provoked by the middle-of-the-night transfer on Friday of US Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith from a Makati jail back to the custody of the US Embassy despite his conviction on charges of raping a Filipino woman.

"Nicole," the rape victim, said she heard about the transfer on midnight of Friday and it brought her to tears.

"*Talagang bastusan na ito ng harap-harapan* (This is now really in your face shamelessness.). All that they would defend was the relationship between the US and Philippines... Is this really how the Philippine government is? Only in the Philippines. I am so dismayed," said Nicole, spilling out her anger in a mix of English and Filipino.

For the 23-year-old Filipino woman who won a historic rape case against Smith, getting up yesterday morning after hearing the news the night before was like waking up from a nightmare.

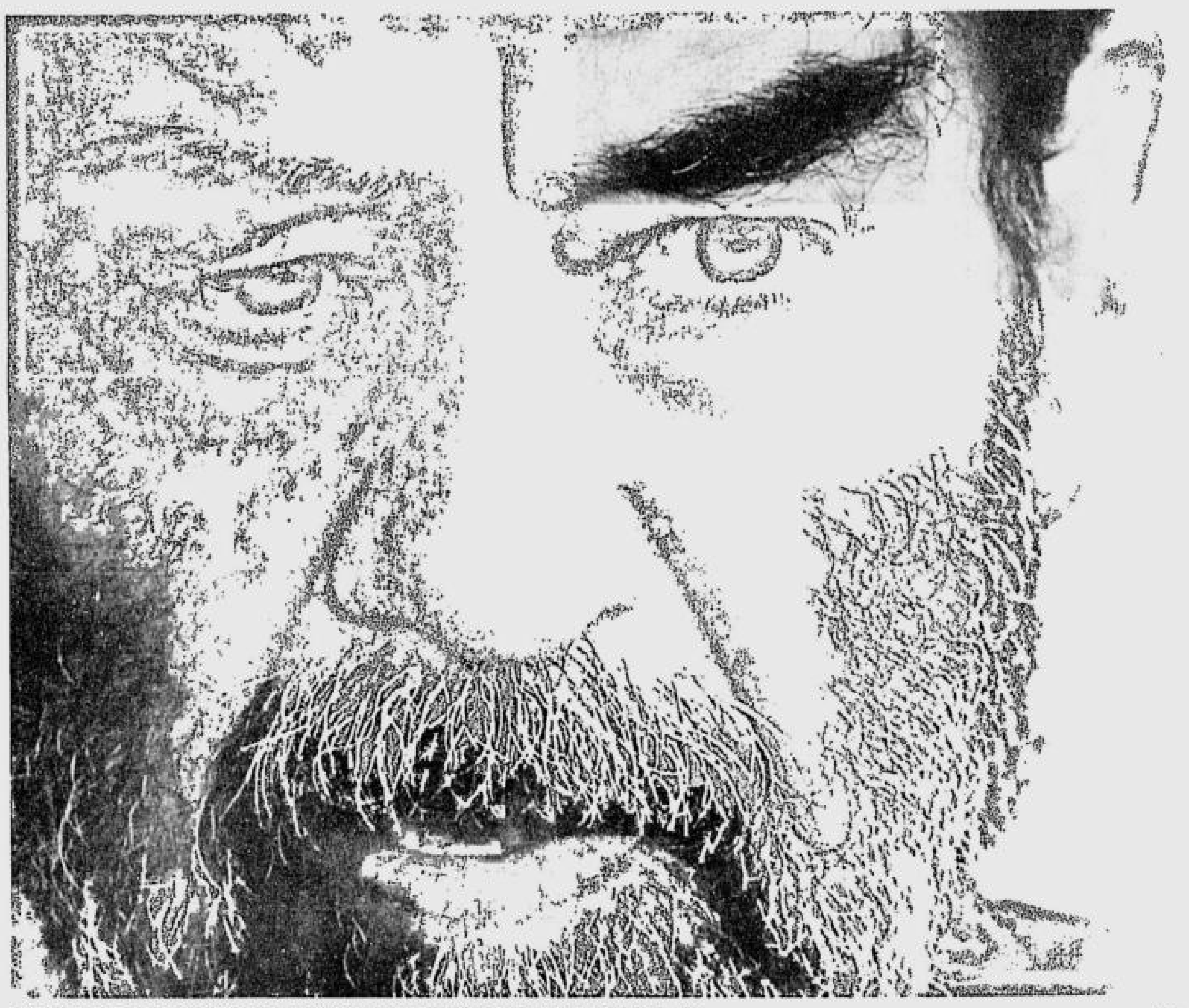
Former Senate President Jovito Salonga branded the government move to hand Smith back to the Americans as "a raw deal and a midnight transaction."

Salonga, one of the country's most respected lawyers, said the victims of the government's giving in to US pressure were Nicole and the country's justice system.

"The raw deal was done against Nicole and the judicial process... against Judge Benjamin Pozon, also against the Court of Appeals," Salonga

A STAB/ A8

Saddam Hussein hanged



EXECUTED FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: SADDAM HUSSEIN; 69. AFP

Faced death without hood, with Koran

BAGHDAD—MOMENTS BEfore he was hanged by the dawn's early light in Baghdad yesterday for crimes against humanity, Saddam Hussein refused to have his head hooded.

"He carried a Koran and said: 'I want this Koran to be given to this person,' a man he called Bander," National Security adviser Mouwafak al-Rubaie told state-run Iraqiyah television news.

A judge read the sentence to Saddam, who was taken in handcuffs to the execution room. When he stood in the execution room, photographs and video footage were taken, according to al-Rubaie.

Sami al-Askari, a political adviser to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, said Saddam "was taken by force to the gallows [by several hooded men] but he was composed when taken to execution."

Al-Askari said the government had not decided what to do with Saddam's body.

It was a grim end for Hussein, 69, the shotgun-waving dictator who ruled Iraq with remorseless brutality for a quarter-century and was driven from power by a US-led war that left his country in shambles.

Iraqiya television news reported that Saddam's half-brother Barzan Ibrahim and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, the former chief justice of the Revolutionary Court, also were hanged. However, three officials said only Saddam was executed.

The station earlier was airing national songs after the first announcement and had a tag on the screen that read "Saddam's execution marks the end of a dark period of Iraq's history."

President George W. Bush called Saddam's execution "the kind of justice he denied the victims of his brutal regime."

SADDAM/ A15

Fate of dictators from Hitler to Saddam

BAGHDAD—SOME DIED IN OFFICE, still clinging to the reins of power, some—such as Saddam Hussein—were deposed and executed, while others spent the rest of their lives in exile or as fugitives from justice.

Here are the fates of some former dictators since the end of World War II in 1945.

DIED IN OFFICE:

- **ADOLF HITLER.** Committed suicide in his Berlin bunker on April 30, 1945, shortly after Soviet Red Army forces entered the capital of his Third Reich.
- **JOSEPH STALIN.** Master of the Kremlin for more than 30 years, the Soviet Union's leader died of a stroke on March 5, 1953, after an all-night dinner.
- **ANTONIO DE OLIVEIRA SALAZAR.** Portugal's dictator for 36 years suffered a major stroke in 1968 and died on July 27, 1970.
- **FRANCISCO FRANCO.** The Spanish head of state known as "Generalissimo Franco" died on Nov. 20, 1975, of heart problems at the age of 83.
- **MAO ZEDONG.** The founder of the People's Republic of China and then its leader for 27 years, Mao died in Beijing on Sept. 9, 1976, aged 82.
- **KIM IL-SUNG.** The "eternal president" of North Korea ruled from 1946 until his death from a stroke in July 1994, when he was succeeded by his son

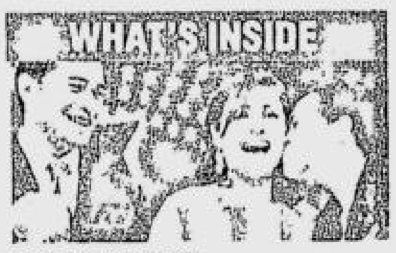
FATE/ A15

HOTLINES: SURE, New Year's Eve is the night to have the most fun. But just in case of an emergency, here are the numbers to call if you need police, medical or the fire department's assistance.

Nationwide	**117**
Makati	**168**
Marikina	**161**

For police, fire hotlines in all other Metro Manila areas, turn to Page A6.

WHAT'S INSIDE



HOT BUZZ: Sore losers still hog center stage, as usual, at the Metro Manila Film Fest even if it's now on its 22nd year.

NEWS /A7

HOT-TEMPERED: GMA berates mayors from that province of gunslingers, Abra, when they ask her to restore their administrative control over the police.

NEWS /A2

Revelry hurts animals most

By Tessa R. Salazar
and Jerome Aning

HUMANS WON'T BE THE ONLY VICtims of firecracker accidents during the New Year's Eve revelry. Cowering in terror and in panic will be millions of household pets who literally have no say in such celebrations.

REVELRY/ A15

Do's, don'ts on fireworks for those who never learn

By Christian V. Esguerra

AS DECEMBER DRAWS TO A CLOSE each year, many parts of Metro Manila resemble a war zone after dusk, reverberating to the repeated booms of firecrackers which sound like heavy artillery.

The holiday season celebrations sadly come hand in hand with deaths and injuries, many among children.

Before the New Year's Eve revelries could even kick off, police reported that injuries from the traditional merrymaking had already exceeded by 88 percent the recorded number when the country welcomed 2006.

Fearing the number of injuries could increase by tomorrow, New Year's Eve, Dr. Enrique Tayag, the Department of Health's chief epidemiologist, has issued fresh warnings against firecrackers and advised the public on what to do in case of accidents.

The public has heard all before but it bears repeating:

- Stop using firecrackers and settle for safer noise-makers like horns (*torotot*). Celebrate with concerts or parties, not with firecrackers.
- If you must have pyrotechnics, go to specific locations in your community where professionals hold fireworks displays. The key word here is professional, meaning the show is handled by experts.
- Never use firecrackers while under the influence of liquor.
- Always have water on standby. Firecrackers that don't explode should be

DO'S, DON'TS/ A6

CELEBRATE, not eliminate, life and limb at the dawn of a new year. INQUIRER PHOTO

Second FRONT PAGE
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread rains over the eastern section of Visayas. Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while the rest of the country will be mostly cloudy with scattered rainshowers.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO INQUIRER RESEARCH/12/30/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Valera to stay in jail for unlicensed guns

By Dona Pazzibugan

ABRA GOV. VICENTE VALERA has been charged with illegal possession of firearms at the Quezon City prosecutor's office, and will remain in detention through New Year's Day.

Valera, the principal suspect in the Dec. 16 assassination of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. and his police escort Adelfo Ortega, were brought before Quezon City state prosecutor Romeo Senson.

Valera and his three bodyguards—Oscar Abella, Pedro Castillo and Leo Bello—were charged for the unlicensed guns and a hand grenade found inside the governor's Chevrolet Suburban.

No bail ruling

Senson has not yet decided whether to grant bail.

The police said Valera and his three bodyguards would remain in the Philippine National Police Custodial Center in Camp Crame.

The governor's vehicle was stopped by PNP Traffic Management Group operatives in Quezon City before dawn last Friday for traveling without license plates and using a siren.

The team found an automatic assault rifle, six pistols and a fragmentation grenade inside the vehicle. Valera claimed the grenade was "planted."

Permits revoked

Chief Insp. Joseph Orsos, head of the TMG legal division, said the permits covering the seized firearms had been revoked last year.

Director Jesus Versoza, head of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, said the CIDG would get an official statement from Valera concerning the Bersamin assassination.

Bersamin and his police bodyguard were gunned down outside Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City last Dec. 16, after attending the wedding of Bersamin's niece.

No show

He was earlier summoned by Task Force Bersamin to give a statement on the killing after an arrested suspect, former Army sergeant Rufino Panday, identified Valera as the mastermind.

The governor, however, did not show up, although he gave an interview to the INQUIRER denying that he was involved in Bersamin's murder.

Valera has not been charged for the Bersamin's killing.

The police said Valera had just come from the house of his supposed girlfriend, former beauty queen Hergielyn Dimagiba, in Teresa Heights in Quezon City when traffic operatives spotted his vehicle late Friday.

Friend's house

A team from the CIDG and the National Bureau of Investigation also conducted a search of Dimagiba's house, but found no firearms.

PNP chief Director General Oscar Calderon has ordered all gun permits in Abra revoked because of the wave of political violence in the province.

Following his arrest, Valera told reporters in Camp Crame that he had no motive to kill Bersamin.

He said he and Bersamin had both run under the Kampi administration party in the last elections.

"Somebody is poisoning the minds of the bereaved family of Chito (Bersamin)," he said.

POLICE CONTROL ISSUE

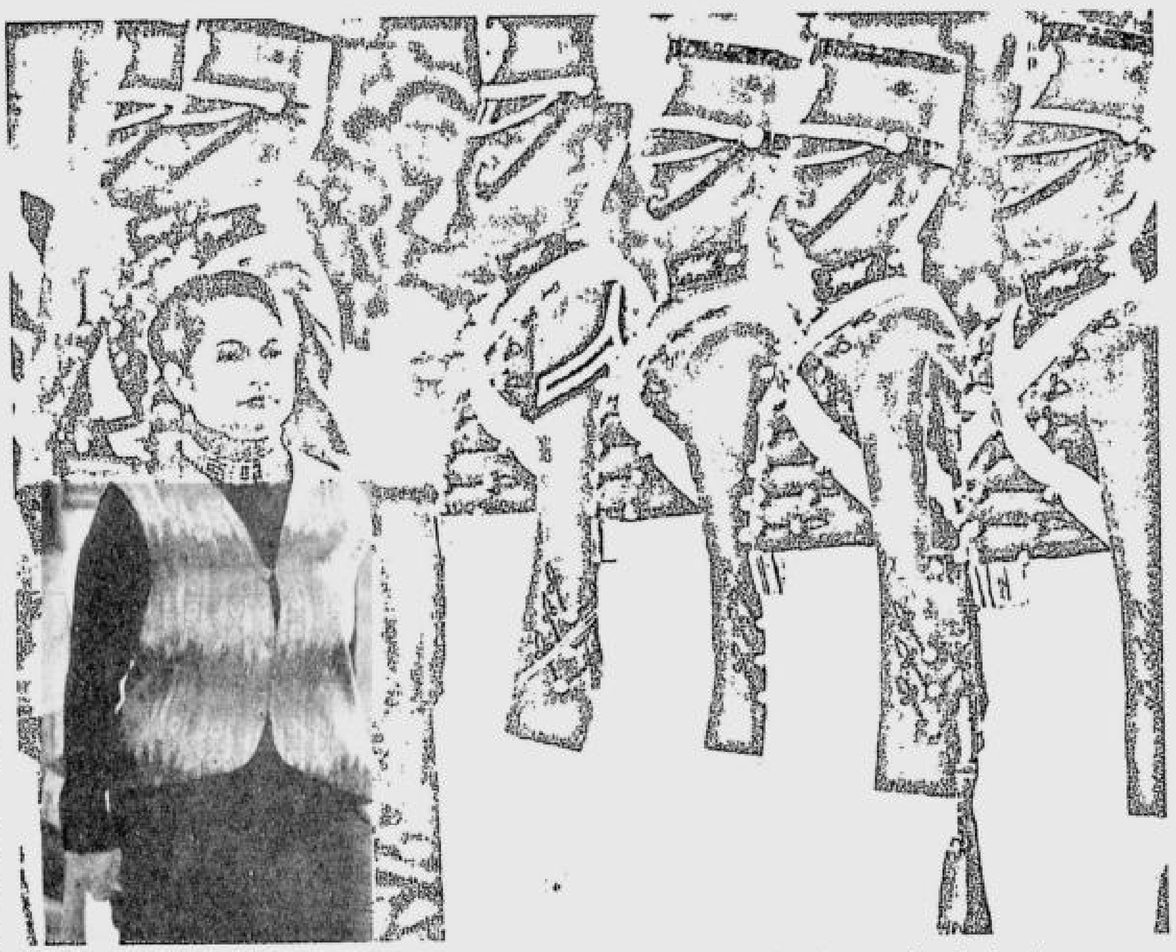
President loses cool, berates Abra mayors

BAGUIO CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo berated a group of Abra mayors who requested that she restore their administrative control over the police, even as security has been tightened in their province following the Dec. 16 killing of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr.

The President has so far refrained from commenting on the political tension gripping Abra in the wake of Bersamin's murder outside a church in Quezon City.

Ms Arroyo led the annual Rizal Day rites here yesterday and offered no opinion about the situation in Abra when asked by reporters.

But according to La Paz Mayor Joseph Bernos, the President lost her temper during a meeting with some mayors from Abra who raised their concerns about their vulnerability after the Bersamin murder.



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo troops the line of Philippine Military Academy cadets during the commemoration of Rizal Day at the Rizal Park, West Burnham, Baguio City, on Friday. LYN RILLON

Police powers

The President met at least 12 Abra mayors on Dec. 26, when she hosted dinner at the Presidential Mansion here for around 200 Northern Luzon local officials.

Acting Baguio Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr., who was at the meeting, said "the [Abra] mayors were allowed some time to speak to her [and they began by] asking for their powers back."

Malacañang placed Abra under the control of the national police in 2005, after a fact-finding team found that the province's politicians were employing private armed groups. It also found evidence that some policemen and soldiers were working as bodyguards for local politicians.

The team included Director Jesus Versoza, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group who was the Cordillera police director at that time. Versoza is now leading the CIDG's probe of the Bersamin murder.

Reprisal fears

Based on the team's recommendation, Malacañang withdrew the control over local police of all Abra officials, including Gov. Vicente Valera.

According to Bernos, some mayors raised the issue of restoring their authority over the police with the President, saying that Bersamin's murder had opened them to political reprisals.

Bautista said the mayors' request only angered Ms Arroyo, who replied that withdrawing their police powers was one of the solutions to stop the violence in Abra.

Bernos and Bautista quoted Ms Arroyo as saying that the mayors' police powers would be abused.

No more killings

Bernos whose brother, Mayor Marc Ysrael Bernos, was killed last Jan. 13, said he was satisfied with the new security measures taken after Bersamin's murder.

He said Ms Arroyo ordered Chief Supt. Raul Gonzales, the Cordillera police director, to make sure there would be no more killings with the 2007 election period about to start.

Balweg murder

Bernos said that among the mayors who raised the issue on the restoration of police powers was Bucloc Mayor Mailed Molina, a leader of the reunited factions of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army, which was founded by slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg.

Balweg, who was murdered by communist rebels in Abra in 1999, lost to Valera in the 1998 congressional race.

In a press conference here on Friday, Director General Oscar Calderon, chief of the Philippine National Police, implicated another Abra mayor in the slaying of a public attorney last year.

Lawyer's killing

He said Boliney Mayor Ronald Balaoas and his father, Benido, a former mayor, ordered the murder of lawyer Eugenia Vinluan-Campol of the Public Attorney's Office on Sept. 5, 2005.

Calderon presented Bernard Fassong, the alleged gunman, at the news conference.

Death threats

Gonzales said Fassong confessed to the murder after he was arrested in Cavite on Dec. 21.

Fassong, police said, shot Campol near her house in Baguio.

PAO chief Persida Rueda-Acosta had assigned Campol to Abra where she won several cases against local politicians. Death threats against Campol forced Acosta to reassign her to Baguio.

Private armies

At the time of her death, Campol was handling a case involving her husband, Julius, and a Boliney official.

"We are starting to neutralize the private armies and warlords in Abra... [by] building up information from around [the provincial] boundaries [where assassins live]. There is a presumption [there are people who will] volunteer to join private armies [for the May 2007 elections]," Calderon said. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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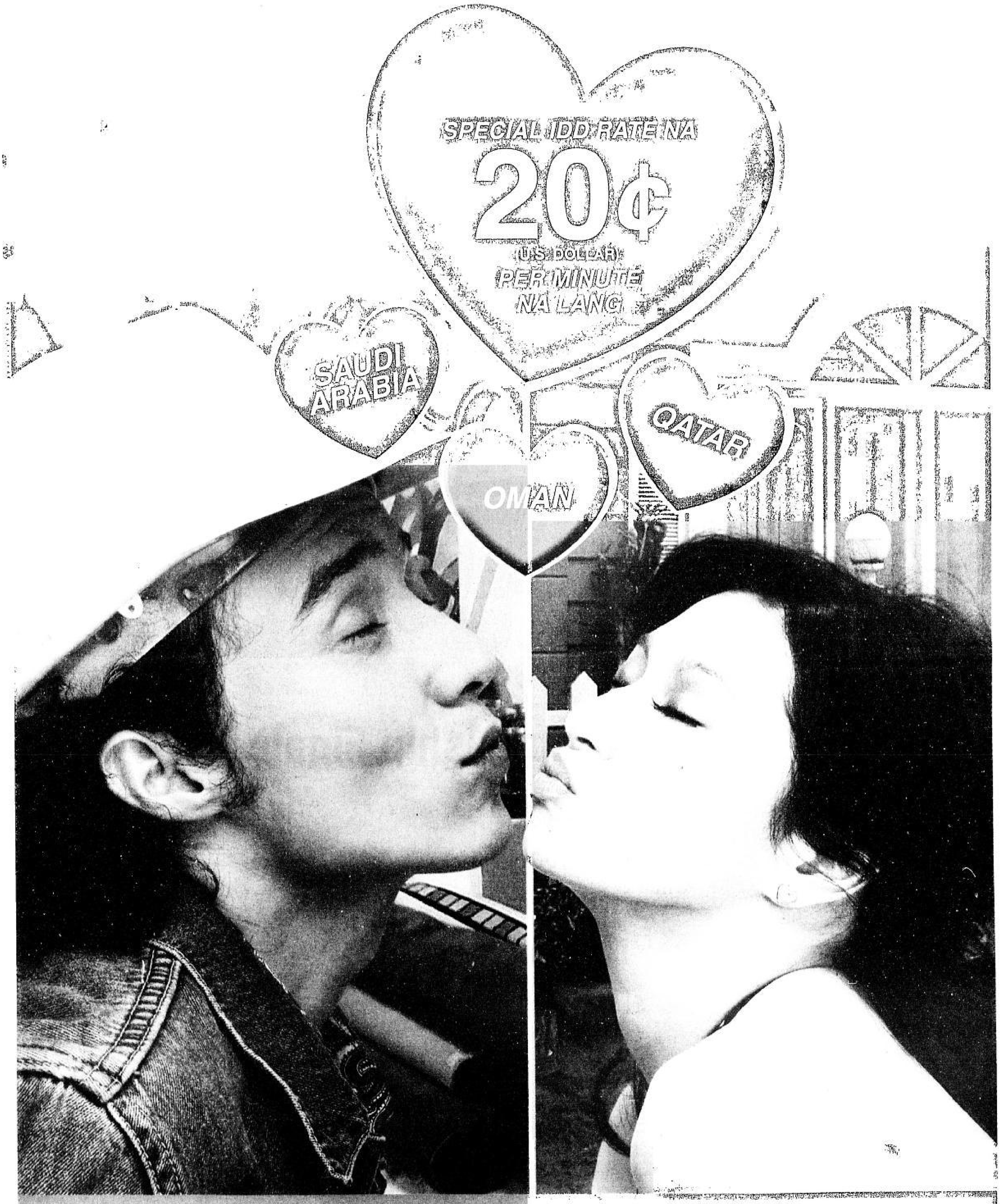

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NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

'New name for peace is dev't'

By Jerome Aning

LAGDAMEO

"THE NEW NAME FOR peace is development," Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines President and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said yesterday as he urged Filipinos, in his New Year's Day Message, to do help one another in alleviating the lives of the marginalized and exploited.

"The promotion of development demands collective intervention and responsibility of government, churches, peace keepers and the entire society," he said. "This is best proven not only in time of calamities brought about by typhoons, fires and tsunamis but also in the normal times."

According to Lagdameo, development must be seen in terms of food on the table of the poor, secure employment for the millions here in the country, low cost medicine for the families of workers, scholarships for the poorest and decent homes for squatters and slum-dwellers.

"It will be a better year when more and more of the marginalized and exploited are offered opportunities to work for and acquire their permanent shelter, genuine health benefits, liberating education, dignified employment and above all sufficient food," he added.

The Archbishop noted that Jan. 1, for the past 38 years, have been observed as the World Day of Peace.

However, he said, peace does not mean the mere absence of hostility, hatred and war, in the climate of violence and counter-violence.

Peace, as a moral imperative, "is brought about by justice, requiring respect for human dignity and human rights, the promotion of the common good by one and all, and the constant practice in solidarity," the prelate explained.

He also recalled the late Pope John Paul II saying that "Peace is the fruit of love which goes beyond what justice can provide."

Lagdameo added: "Unless there is work of justice and love in our situation, our peace will be in a precarious state. It is difficult. But together we can do it!"

EU allots $2.6M for RP typhoon victims

BRUSSELS—THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION allocated Friday two million euros ($2.6 million) in humanitarian aid for victims of typhoons in the Philippines that have killed more than a thousand people since late September.

The emergency aid will help provide drinking water, medical support, sanitation, non-food items and contribute to repairing shelters, the Commission, the European Union's executive body, said in a statement.

The Philippines National Disaster Coordinating Council said Thursday that a series of natural disasters had left more than 3,000 people dead or missing there this year.

Four typhoons towards the end of the year and a series of deadly mudslides left at least 1,312 people dead and 1,859 missing and believed dead, the civil defense agency said in its annual report.

It said the total damage to agriculture and infrastructure from the typhoons and the landslides amounted to P20.1 billion.

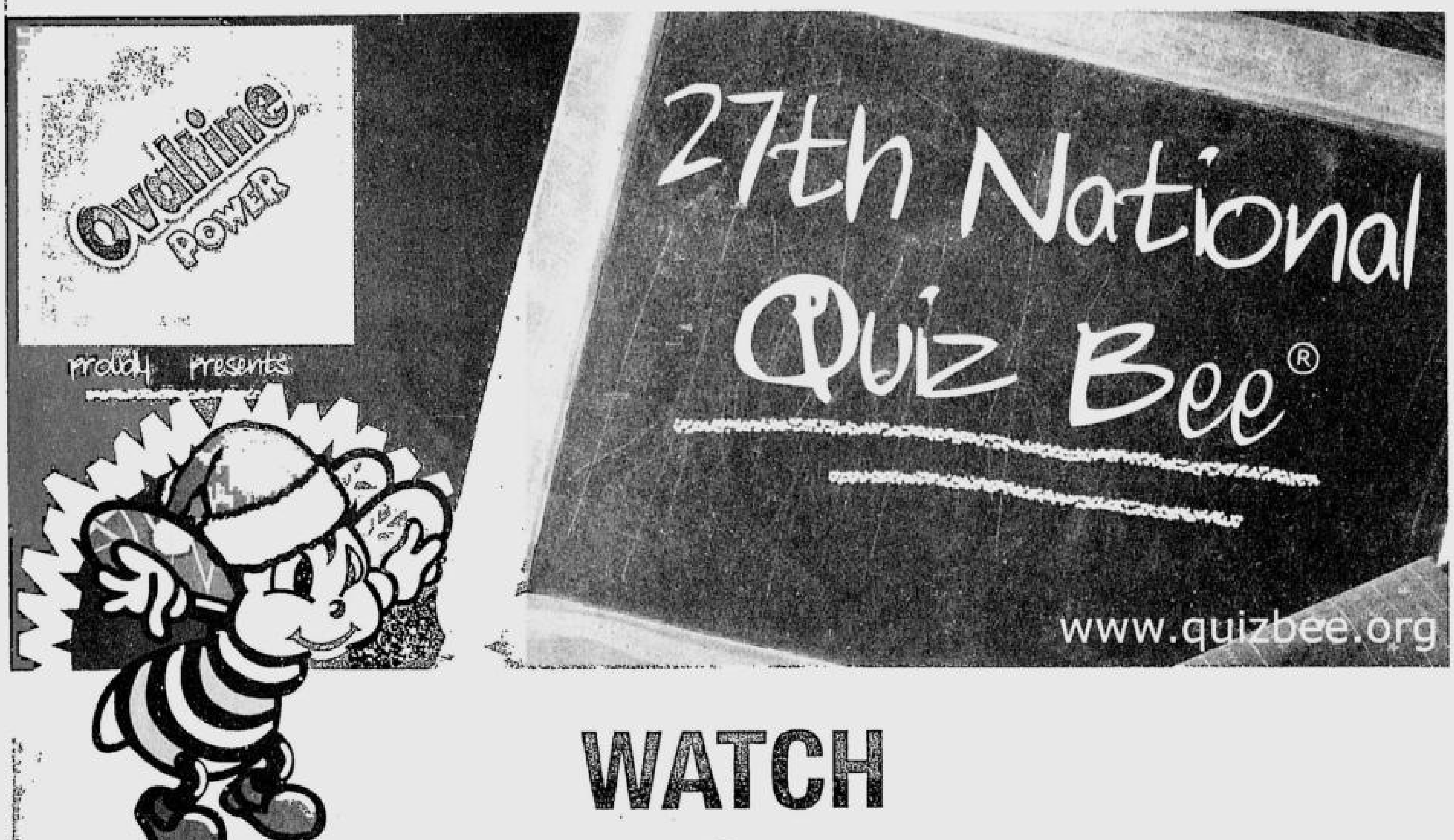
"Continuous rainfall in the affected area is further aggravating the situation and it is feared that the area cannot withstand further rains or flooding," the Commission said.

The Philippines is one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world.

It is hit by numerous storms and typhoons each year, and sits in the Pacific "Ring of Fire" where continental plates meet, causing frequent seismic and volcanic activity.

Widespread poverty also forces large numbers of people to live in dangerous areas, such as near river banks and coastal areas that are prone to flooding, and on unstable mountain slopes or near volcanoes. *AFP*

THE BATTLE FOR INTELLECTUAL SUPREMACY CONTINUES...



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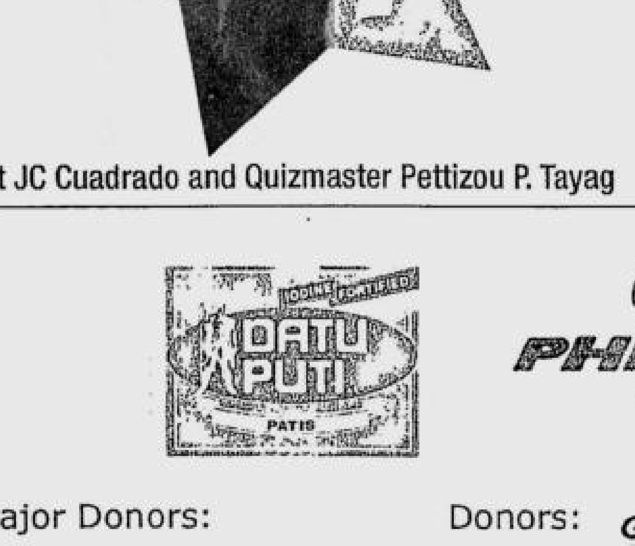

Host JC Cuadrado and Quizmaster Pettizou P. Tayag

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 31, 2006
Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28

I will offer him

Hannah became pregnant. She gave birth to a son and called him Samuel because she said: "I have asked Yahweh to give him to me."

Once more Elkanah went to the temple with his family to offer his yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow to Yahweh. Hannah would not go along but she said to her husband, "I will bring the child there as soon as he is weaned. He shall be presented to Yahweh and stay there forever."

When the child was weaned, Hannah took him with her along with a three-year-old bull, a measure of flour and a flask of wine, and she brought him to Yahweh's house at Shiloh. The child was still young.

After they had slain the bull, they brought the child to Eli. Hannah exclaimed: "Oh, my lord, look! I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to Yahweh. I asked for this child and Yahweh granted me the favor I begged of him. Now, I think, Yahweh is asking for this child. As long as he lives, he belongs to Yahweh."

And they worshiped Yahweh there.

2nd Reading: 1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24

God's children

See what singular love the Father has for us: we are called children of God, and we really are. This is why the world does not know us, because it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children and what we shall be has not yet been shown. Yet when he appears in his glory, we know that we shall be like him, for then we shall see him as he is.

When our conscience does not condemn us, dear friends, we may have complete confidence in God. Then whatever we ask we shall receive, since we keep his commands and do what pleases him.

His command is that we believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ and that we love one another, as he has commanded us.

Whoever keeps his commands remains in God and God in him. It is by the Spirit God has given us that we know he lives in us.

Gospel: Luke 2:41-52

I must be in my Father's house

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, as was customary. And when Jesus was 12 years old, he went up with them according to the custom for this feast. After the festival was over, they returned, but the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem and his parents did not know it.

They thought he was in the company and after walking the whole day they looked for him among their relatives and friends. As they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem searching for him, and on the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. And all the people were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

His parents were very surprised when they saw him and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I were very worried while searching for you." Then he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Do you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand this answer.

Jesus went down with them, returning to Nazareth, and he continued to be subject to them. As for his mother, she kept all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and in divine and human favor.

Commentary

Hannah prays for a child and when God grants her that gift, she rejoices and returns the child to God when he is old enough to be weaned. The child has always belonged to Yahweh. Every child has from the beginning belonged to God and is entrusted to their parents to give back to God. We are first the children of God, conceived and birthed in love, in the Spirit of Jesus, the Word made flesh. This is who we truly are! We were created to love, each in our own singular way. Mary and Joseph had to learn that their child was not theirs, but belonged to God alone. We must spend this year searching for who Jesus truly is—not what we want him to be for us, but what he is before God. And we must, with Jesus, grow in wisdom and grace as we grow in years.

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Patapos na ang taon, pero hindi pa tapos ang Pinoy.

Sa pagtatapos ng taon, nakita ng mundo ang Pilipino sa harap ng maraming pagsubok.
Ngunit patuloy ang pakikipaglaban ng Pinoy.

Kaming mga testigo ay magpapatunay na sa harap ng matinding dagok, hindi tayo sumusuko.
Kami po sa ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs ay sama-samang magpupugay
sa mga Pilipinong nagsimula ng pagbabago.

AKO ANG SIMULA

An ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs
Yearend Special

NGAYONG GABI 9:45 PM

ABS-CBN
NEWS & CURRENT AFFAIRS

Puno: DILG moved Smith late night to avoid traffic

From page A1

the afternoon," Puno said.

"(We transferred Smith during the night) for security reasons because there'd be less traffic," Corpus said.

"It was a DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) decision," Puno said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Puno said Ms Arroyo and the Cabinet's national security cluster agreed even before Christmas that the departments of foreign affairs, justice and the interior should find the most appropriate legal means to comply with the Visiting Forces Agreement with regard to Smith's custody.

"There was an approval in principle to find the appropriate mechanism in complying with the VFA. And we decided that the most appropriate means was to comply with the court decision," Puno said in a separate phone interview.

Puno noted that Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon, in his Dec. 4 decision convicting Smith of rape, ruled that the American shall be kept in the Makati City Jail "until such time that the Philippine and US governments agree on the place of detention" in accordance with VFA provisions.

Place of detention

He claimed that this was complied with when Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney signed an agreement on Dec. 22 to the effect that Smith would be detained at the Rowe Building inside the US Embassy compound.

The agreement also said that the Philippine government will have access to Smith's place of detention "to ensure that the US is in compliance with the terms of the VFA."

"The agreement signed by (Kenney and Romulo) is meant to assure the Philippines that Smith wouldn't be spirited away while he is detained at the American Embassy here," Corpus said.

Corpus has custodial supervision over Smith, being in charge of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology that oversees the Makati jail.

First time

"(It's) the first time they have allowed access to their premises anytime," said Corpus.

Puno said the interior department on Friday contacted the US Embassy after receiving the Romulo-Kenney agreement and the DOJ opinion favoring Smith's transfer to US custody.

The DOJ opinion was signed by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on Thursday.

"The specifics of whether the manner of complying with the VFA was legally sound were left to the departments. So we went to the Department of Justice for a legal opinion," Puno said.

"It's not so much the DOJ opinion as the fact that the transfer was in full compliance with the court decision that we decided to push through with the transfer.. This was already the opinion of our legal (division)," Puno said.

"It was a DILG decision to comply with (Pozon's) decision in accordance with the DOJ opinion," Puno said.

"We were just the implementer of the court decision in accordance with our treaty obligations under the VFA," he added.

"The minute that the (Romulo-Kenney) agreement was signed we already lost the right to have custody of Daniel Smith," Puno said.

Executive prerogative

He said Smith's transfer happened close to midnight because it took time for the US side to prepare for Smith's transfer as did the coordination between the Philippine and US authorities.

Corpus said the DILG received a copy of the Romulo-Kenney accord and the DOJ opinion backing it late Friday afternoon.

Corpus said that Justice Secretary Gonzalez believed the turnover of Smith to US authorities "is an exercise of executive prerogative in the conduct of foreign relations."

In a phone interview, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Antonio Eduardo Nachura said the Bureau of Jail Management Penology "apparently acted on the orders of the DILG on the basis of an opinion rendered by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez."

Nachura said Gonzalez signed the opinion on Dec. 27 and issued it on Dec. 29.

Nachura declined to give a copy of the full opinion and read only the two-paragraph conclusion which he said encapsulated Gonzalez's stand.

DFA upholds legality

"In his conclusion, the reason for denial of the Makati Regional Trial Court has ceased to exist because the Philippine government has complied with the judge's ruling by way of submission of an agreement signed by the DFA Secretary who the judge has specifically named as having the authority to sign," said Nachura.

The Department of Foreign Affairs also upheld the legality of handing over Smith back to American custody.

DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya said "the turnover of custody is in compliance with the treaty obligations."

"It does not diminish the gravity of his crime for which he had been convicted under our laws," Malaya said in a statement.

Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Ruben Reyes said the removal of Smith from the Makati jail ahead of the final decision of the Court of Appeals did not constitute an affront to the appellate court.

Asked if he views the matter as an insult to the court, Reyes replied: "I would not take it in that light because this issue is susceptible to interpretation."

He said a definite ruling by the court division under Associate Justice Apolinario D. Bruselas Jr next week may finally "clear up" the issue. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Volt Contreras and Armand Nocum*

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Marikina	646-2436	646-1651
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SOURCE: PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE COMPANY 2006 WHITE PAGES

COMPILED BY CYRIL BONABENTE AND KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH

Do's, don'ts on fireworks for those who never learn

From page A1

hosed down. People are often injured when they pick up firecrackers that blow up after appearing to be duds.

- Do not experiment with firecrackers. People sometimes fill bottles with gunpowder along with metals.
- Administer first aid to a firecracker explosion victim by washing the injured body part with soap and running water.
- A child who ingests watusi, or the dancing firecracker, should be made to swallow six egg whites. The dose should be doubled for adult victims. The egg white absorbs the yellow phosphorus, the toxic substance in the watusi.
- Whatever the injury, be it serious or minor, victims should be immediately brought to the hospital.

From Dec. 21 to 28, the Department of Health recorded 205 injuries, against 109 during the same period in 2005, said Tayag.

Of the total, 194 people were hurt by firecrackers while 10 were hit by stray bullets. A lone victim swallowed the highly toxic watusi.

Some of the firecrackers are homemade, cans filled with explosive powder with a crude fuse attached. Many are churned out in small workshops and factories around Manila's suburbs.

Hundreds are maimed each year when the firecrackers burst prematurely.

Most victims male

Tayag said 32 of the firecracker injuries were caused by the "piccolo," 25 by the "five star," 14 by the "whistle bomb," and 13 by the "triangle."

Most of the victims were male (165), including 71 bystanders.

Sixty-eight of the victims were injured in the eye while 10 required amputation.

This year, some of the fireworks on sale have prompted the government to take action.

Police in Metro Manila have banned the sale and use of a bazooka look-a-like called "boga," which consists basically of a plastic pipe with a trigger, painted to make it look like the real thing.

Scores have been injured, blinded or deafened by the pipes, many because they peered inside the barrel after pulling the trigger.

Police have ordered the confiscation of the device, but with hundreds of bogas already sold, few have confidence police will be able to fully implement the order.

Tayag said the boga, which is triggered using denatured alcohol, had injured 38 people, 24 of them in the eyes. One of the victims needed amputation, he said.

Looks like real thing

"These devices really cause serious injuries and people should stay away from them," Tagay said.

Ronald Baranda, who gave up his job as a taxi driver last year to manufacture the device full time, says it is not as dangerous as other fireworks.

"It looks like a real weapon, though different in style with an attached toy gun as a prop," he told Reuters after demonstrating how the device worked.

"So it will be fun, clean," he said.

Other vendors also say their wares are not dangerous but that they get a bad press.

"Sales are very bad because of TV news," said Susan Endaya, who has sold firecrackers at the Divisoria market for five years.

"There is so much bad news. But what I am selling is not dangerous," she said.

Parents say they are not taking any chances. With little regulation of the industry and lax safety standards, customers say they will not risk starting the New Year with tragedy.

"We want to avoid any accidents. I am scared we will get hurt. Money for food might end up being used to pay for hospital bills," said Net Paruelo, a mother of three. *With a report from Reuters*

The 32nd Metro Manila Film Festival 2006
Piling-piling Pinaka-magagaling na Pelikulang Pilipino
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Best Actress : JUDY ANN SANTOS
Best Director : JOSE JAVIER REYES (Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo)
Best Supporting Actor : JOHNNY DELGADO
Best Supporting Actress : GINA PAREÑO
Best Child Performer : NASH AGUAS (Shake, Rattle & Roll 8)

Best Theme Song : HAWAK KAMAY
Best Sound Recording : DITOY AGUILA (Mano Po 5)
Best Musical Score : VON DE GUZMAN (Mano Po.5)
Best Cinematography : MANO PO 5
Best Make-up Artist : BABY LUCERO
Best Visual Effects : TATLONG BARAHA
Best Production Design : MANO PO 5
Best Screenplay : KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
Best Story : JOSE JAVIER REYES (Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo)

Best Floats
1st : TATLONG BARAHA
2nd : MANO PO 5
3rd : KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Star of the Night : SUNSHINE CRUZ, RYAN AGONCILLO
Gender Sensitivity Award : KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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Controversy continues to hound Manila film festival

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WINNERS ALL. Cesar Montano (Best Actor), Judy Anne Santos (Best Actress) and Gina Parino (Best Supporting Actress) celebrate their triumph at the Metro Manila Film Festival Award night at the Aliw Theater in Pasay City, Thursday.

INQUIRER PHOTO / RODEL ROTONI

AS USUAL, CONTROVERSY BROKE AT the Metro Manila Film Festival awards ceremony held at the Aliw Theater on Friday, where Judy Ann Santos and Cesar Montano ran off with best actor honors.

The *chuva-chuva* was over the choice of "Enteng Kabisote 3," produced by OctoArts and M-Zet, as Best Picture—its only award.

Star Cinema executive producer Malou N. Santos, was clearly upset over having to settle for the Second Best Picture award for the entry "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo."

In her acceptance speech she burst out: "After four years, we've decided to join the festival [again]. I don't know if I made the right decision... I believe 'Kasal' is the real Best Picture."

The controversy was over the judging criteria which gave "commercial viability" equivalent points to "artistic-technical excellence."

Ric Camaligan, MMFF executive committee member, said he was "surprised" by Santos' onstage outburst because all producers who jointed the festival read and signed the rules and regulations which defined the criteria.

According to lawyer Espiridion Laxa, chair of MMFF's rules and legal affairs committee, "commercial viability constitutes 40 percent of the criteria for Best Picture; artistic and technical excellence, and global appeal, another 40 percent; Filipino cultural values, 20 percent."

On the fourth day of the two-week festival, "Enteng" has posted the highest earnings at the tills so far at P59.4 million, while "Kasal" was second with P42.3 million.

Still, "Kasal" brought home the lion's share of the awards that evening, winning six other trophies: Best Director, Original Story and Screenplay (for Reyes); Best Actress (Judy Ann Santos), Best Supporting Actress (Gina Pareño) and Best Original Theme Song (Yeng Constatino's "Hawak-Kamay"). It also won two special honors: Most Gender Sensitive Film and the Gatpuno Antonio J. Villegas Cultural Award.

"Mano Po 5" won four trophies: Best Cinematography (Charlie Peralta), Musical Score (Von de Guzman), Sound Recording (Ditoy Aguila) and Production Design (Edgar Littaua).

"Ligalig" won three awards: Best Actor (Cesar Montano), Supporting Actor (Johnny Delgado) and Editing (Jason Cahapay).

"Tatlong Baraha" won three awards: Best Makeup (Baby Lucero), Visual Effects (Imaginary Friends) and Best Float.

Third Best Picture "Shake Rattle & Roll 8" got one other award for Best Child Performer Nash Aguas. The horror trilogy from Regal has earned P24.6 million at the box office so far.

The producers of the nine films received P1-million subsidy each courtesy of President Macapagal-Arroyo that evening.

In return, the MMFF gave the President a Lifetime Achievement Award for her "support of the movie industry."

Back to the controversy: Malou Santos explained: "I have nothing against 'Enteng'; Vic Sotto (the star of "Enteng") is close to me... But at the end of the day, it's all politics."

Best Actress Judy Ann Santos said she is pleased with her trophy, but added: "Everyone has his own opinion. The [Best Picture] result is no big deal to me. What is important to me is that the public enjoys our movie."

Orly Ilacad, "Enteng" producer, was unruffled. He told the INQUIRER: "Every year, there is controversy at the MMFF. Last year it was about 'Kutob.' As I've said before whenever we attend an awards ceremony we don't expect anything. We are prepared to win or lose. But I am very grateful that we won because we spent a lot of time and effort on 'Enteng.'"

As for the protests, Ilacad said: "Every producer thinks his or her film is the best. We were not the ones who voted; we were just the recipients of the award. Perhaps 'Enteng' met the jurors' criteria for a Best Picture."

A possible solution offered by filmmaker Joey Romero, MMFF screening committee member, is a "review of the criteria."

"If we want to give recognition to the top grosser, then we should give it the box-office champion award. But the Best Picture should remain the Best Picture," Romero said.

AIRFARE

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Seized explosives no 'firecrackers' —NBI

By Tina G. Santos

THE DAMAGE WOULD HAVE been more extensive than originally believed had the "firecrackers" seized from a man about to board a light rail train at the Monumento station in Caloocan City on Friday exploded, the National Bureau of Investigation said yesterday.

Special Investigator 4 Romeo Cotingjo of the NBI Explosives and Ordnance Division said that had the explosives seized from Bernie Siguenza, 21, of Buhi, Camarines Sur, blown up, it would have affected three to five LRT coaches and everything else within a 20-meter radius.

Cotingjo, who claimed the NBI arrived in the area at least one hour before the police did, said that among the items seized from the suspect were five time fuses, a bottle containing black powder believed to be a bomb component, five sticks of dynamite, a bottle of cologne and several firecrackers like *super lolos* and *watusi*.

Cotingho said it appeared Siguenza had even placed "NBI markings" on the seized items.

Cotingho said that although the items had yet to be confirmed by laboratory tests, he believed they "were dangerous explosives and not just pyrotechnics."

He said the NBI was not able to run lab tests on the items because these were immediately brought to Camp Crame in Quezon City by police officials, for further examination according to Northern Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Tango.

Initial reports had said that only firecrackers had been found on Siguenza.

"Perhaps this was to prevent causing panic among the people. But we should tell the truth because several people would have been affected," Cotingjo said, pointing out the incident occurred on the eve of the LRT Rizal Day bombing five years ago.

During interrogation, Siguenza reportedly said he had bought the firecrackers in Bulacan and was taking them home to Buhi, after somebody there had asked him to bring some pyrotechnics for the New Year's Eve celebration.

The NBI, however, said the suspect's excuse that the explosives were to be used for the revelry was "very remote."

"*Kasado na ito e, sisindihan na lang* (They were armed, all they needed was to be lit)," Cotingjo said.

The Rizal Day attacks of June 30, 2000, killed 22 people and wounded hundreds in four different places in Metro Manila, including a light rail train, and were believed carried out by regional and local Moslem terrorist groups.

But NPD chief Tango, in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER, downplayed the most recent incident, saying that "the materials taken from the suspect could be made into an explosive devise but there was no empirical indication that the materials would be used to sow terror." *With Nancy C. Carvajal*

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RP to implement global mapping, profiling system for overseas jobs

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES WILL IMPLEMENT a global mapping and profiling system that would make it easier to match Filipino workers with skills needed abroad in order to ensure they have quality jobs, the Department of Labor and Employment said yesterday.

Speaking during the opening of a conference in Manila of labor attachés representing 34 Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (Polos) around the world, Labor Undersecretary for Employment Danilo Cruz said that through the use of e-services, OFWs and their skills would be profiled and matched with world demand.

This would speed up their deployment and ensure that the Filipinos going overseas would also have quality jobs with good employers waiting for them, he said.

Market trends today would also be studied so that future OFWs, even while still in school, could be trained with the skills that would guarantee them employment. A labor official earlier said that while Filipino workers were in demand abroad, many could not be hired for lack of the proper skills.

As the Polos will be in the frontline of this service to OFWs, Cruz called on the labor attachés for inputs on how to achieve an efficient skills mapping and profiling system.

He said the Philippines should take advantage of the continued worldwide preference for OFWs, as he pointed out that the government had surpassed its one-millionth OFW deployment target.

"Along this line, I urge you to be judicious in the use of resources, and to exercise due diligence, as I also emphasize the importance of accountability in your actions in the service to our OFWs," he added.

Cruz said this thrust would be reinforced by more innovative ways of providing better protection to OFWs, including improved Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars to better prepare them for the realities of working overseas, and the enhanced reintegration program for the OFWs and their families.

The five-day Polo conference began in Tagaytay City on Dec. 27-28 and will end in Pasay City on Jan. 3-5, 2007.

U.S. Embassy closed on Jan. 2

UNITED STATES PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush has declared Jan. 2, 2007, a National Day of Mourning in honor of President Gerald R. Ford, who died on Dec. 26.

All US government departments and agencies will be closed that day, the US Embassy in Manila said in a press statement.

The US Embassy in Manila and the US Consular Agency in Cebu will be closed for business on Tuesday. All interviews scheduled for Jan. 2 will be rescheduled on Jan. 3. The US Embassy said it would inform all applicants of the change.

Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S ISSUE, a front-page story—"Cops hold Valera; girl friend's home searched"—misstated that the HK MP5 is an automatic assault rifle. It is a submachine gun.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE
Quezon City

December 29, 2006

REVENUE MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 77-2006

SUBJECT : **Extension of the Deadline for Availment of the Improved Voluntary Assessment Program (IVAP) for Taxable Year 2005 and Prior Years under Certain Conditions.**

TO : **All Internal Revenue Officials, Employees and Others Concerned**

Pursuant to Section 9 of RR No. 18-2006 giving the undersigned the authority to extend the deadline for the availment of the IVAP under meritorious circumstances, the aforesaid deadline which has been extended to December 29, 2006 is hereby further extended until January 31, 2007.

This Circular shall take effect immediately. All revenue officers and employees are hereby enjoined to give this Circular as wide a publicity as possible.

JOSE MARIO C. BUÑAG
Commissioner of Internal Revenue

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He was gone in 30 minutes

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN 30 MINUTES, AMERICAN RAPE CONVICT Daniel Smith was gone.

That was how long it took for the 21-year-old Marine to pack his things—toiletries, clothes, books—and board the vehicle that whisked him out of the Makati City Jail and on to the US Embassy just after 11 p.m. on Friday, Supt. Belvic Oreiro told the INQUIRER yesterday.

"*Biglaan eh* (It was sudden, eh). He only had a few belongings so he was able to pack quickly. I saw that he had two bags, athletic bags I think, when he left," the MCJ warden said.

Altogether, Smith spent 25 days in a Philippine jail, the subject of a custody battle that pitted a Makati judge against the United States government, which was backed by President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

Officials of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), which administered the jail, said they had no idea Smith would be leaving until four US officials and two officers from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) arrived at around 11 p.m. to pick up the Marine, Oreiro said.

"He was awake... We were awake because we are public servants," said Oreiro. "We are open 24 hours, and we are on red alert. We knew that he was going to be taken anytime."

Throughout his stay in a room separate from the rest of the MCJ's more than 600 detainees, Smith had security men from the US Embassy guarding him, among them members of the American military.

A source privy to Smith's transfer said the American Marine, jailed on Dec. 4 after being convicted of raping a Filipino woman last year, already knew at 10:30 p.m. that he was going to be returned to the US Embassy, or half an hour before jail officials knew, by Oreiro's account.

US-Philippine deal

Oreiro said DILG officials, led by Undersecretary for Public Safety Marius Corpus, had brought the documents for Smith's transfer, including an agreement between Philippine and US authorities that Smith should be returned to American custody pending an appeal of his conviction, as stipulated in the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

Smith and his three co-accused, who were acquitted of the rape charges—Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier—were held at the embassy during the yearlong court proceedings.

Smith was the only one held at the MCJ, a holding facility for suspects still facing trial.

Goodbye to the warden

"He was between two big men from the US Embassy when he was walking to their vehicle," Oreiro said, recounting Smith's departure from the jailhouse. "He was wearing a white undershirt, blue basketball shorts and a pair of sneakers."

"He shook my hand and he hugged me, tapped my back... Maybe it was his gesture of thanking me because I was his custodian at the jail. He said something to me but I did not quite understand it," Oreiro said.

The embassy vehicles then drove away.

The BJMP Metro Manila director, Supt. Serafin Barretto Jr., said the RP-US agreement returning Smith to US custody gave the BJMP and the Philippine National Police the right to inspect Smith's detention facility inside the embassy.

10 x 12 feet

According to the agreement, Smith will be held on the ground floor of the Rowe JUSMAG (Joint US Military Advisory Group) building within the embassy compound, inside a room that measures 10 feet by 12 feet, Barretto said.

"We will have regular inspections of his detention facility, surprise inspections even, because the agreement said we have access to him anytime. We will do that depending on the order of the DILG," said Barretto.

He defended the DILG-initiated transfer of Smith, which was carried out even before the Court of Appeals could rule on Smith's petition seeking his return to US custody.

Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon, who convicted Smith of rape, had junked the plea, saying that the US right of custody over Smith, as stipulated in the VFA, "was terminated after the completion of the trial and rendition of judgment of conviction."

Nothing illegal

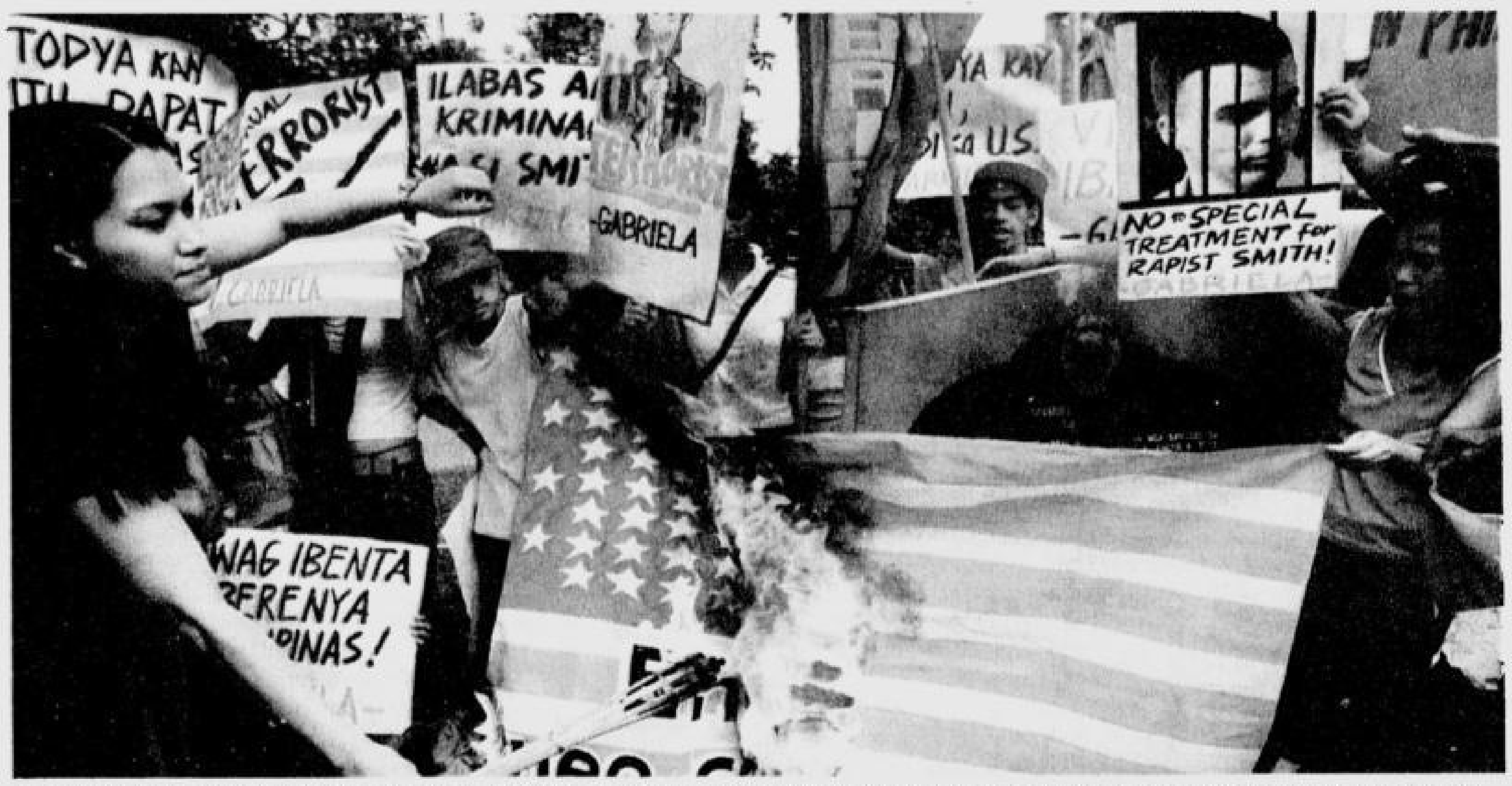
"The transfer was not illegal because remember that Judge Pozon's stated that he (Smith) will be committed to the city jail only on a temporary basis and until the Philippine and US governments agreed on where Smith should be held," Barretto said.

"Now, there's already an agreement."

Pozon, however, had also ruled that the embassy was not among the facilities Smith could serve his sentence of up to 40 years at as the Philippine courts would lose custody over him.

Barretto said that keeping Smith at the MCJ would have violated many laws, including the Revised Penal Code, which provides for the commitment of convicts to facilities of the Bureau of Corrections, not the BJMP.

"We would keep on violating the Revised Penal Code, the Constitution and international law on the treatment of inmates if we kept Smith at the MCJ," he said.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NO SPECIAL TREATMENT for RAPIST SMITH!
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PINAS!

RAGE RUNS IN THE STREETS leading to the US Embassy on Saturday. Protesters condemn President Arroyo as a traitor for approving the return of convicted rapist Marine Daniel Smith to US custody. REM ZAMORA

'A stab

From page A1

said. "It is largely agai where there is a pending her lawyer Evalyn Ursua. QUIRER.

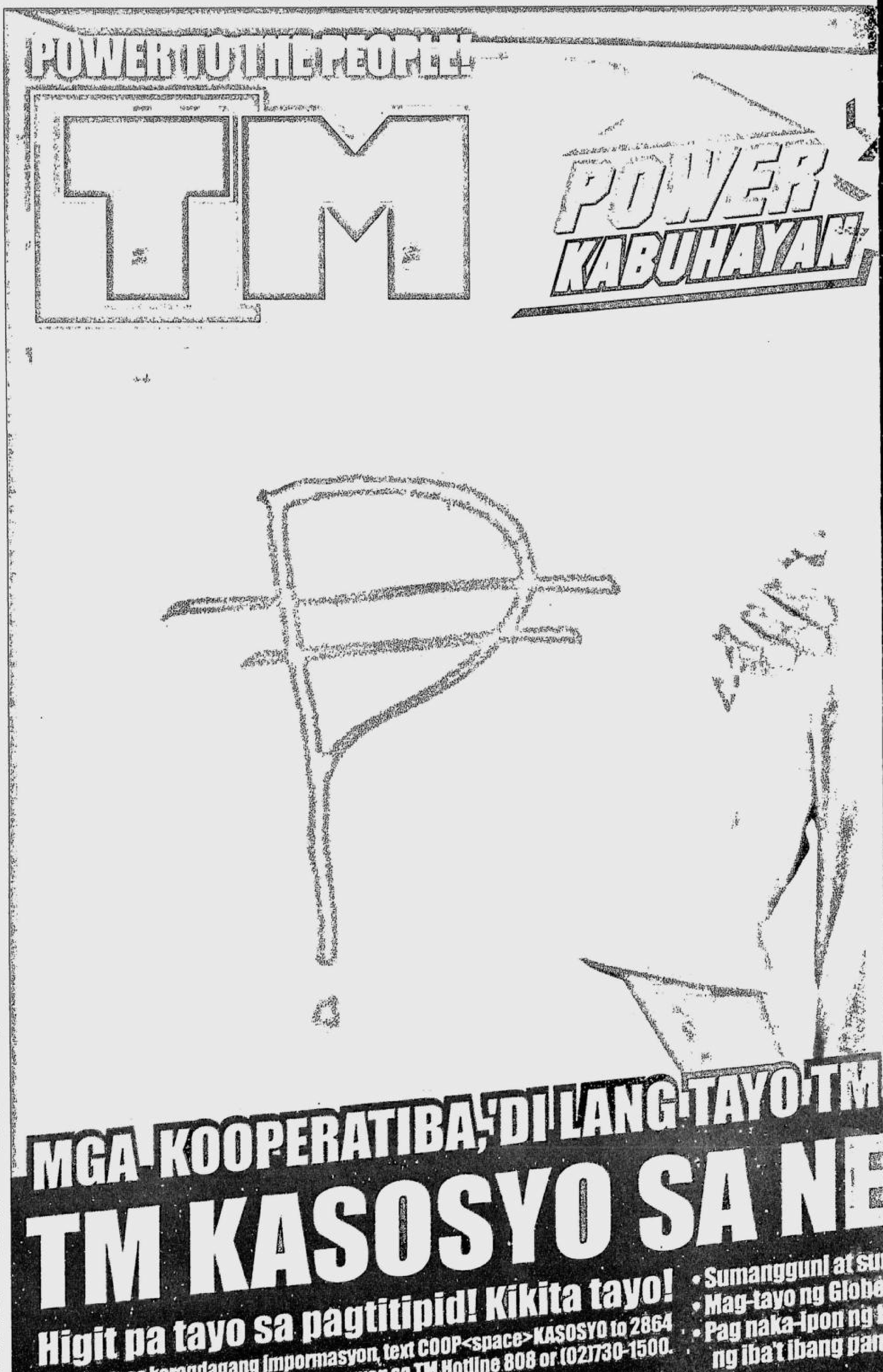
Binay alerted

Nicole has questioned the US-Philippines Visit which the US invokes in Smith.

The women's group the transfer move.

"Like thieves in the nig tration and its cohorts and justice departments. lawyers for Smith, have move," said Emmi de Jes general.

"Of course I cried, hearing about it... They ties) have no respect for ernment just decided to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Smith could return to the US Embassy," Nicole said by phone, her voice trembling.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno told the Inquirer it was his office that made the decision to allow the return of Smith to US custody—despite the absence of a Court of Appeals ruling on the Smith custody issue. *(Story on Page A8.)*

US takes care of its own

Nicole said this violated the ruling of Judge Benjamin Pozon, who had ordered Smith confined at the Makati City Jail pending an agreement between the two governments on the facility where he was to be incarcerated.

"If I had the choice, I would like to be a US citizen now because they (the US) would defend a citizen, even if he is a convicted criminal, while the Philippines would not defend someone who is fighting for her rights," said the Zamboanga native.

Knowing that Smith's transfer was a decision by the executive branch, Nicole had strong words for Ms Arroyo.

"She's stabbing us in the back, I know, for the Americans. In 2007, we'll have elections again and I hope the people will vote for those who can defend them from these Americans," Nicole said.

End won't justify means

Even administration ally Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago sounded aghast at what happened.

"I'm afraid that the end does not justify the means... The means used is questionable because this is under the jurisdiction of the judicial branch and, hence, the executive cannot take any step concerning physical custody of the accused without judicial authority."

Santiago added: "Secretary Puno should have not acted on his own. And I'm afraid that strictly speaking, he's now in contempt of court. Assuming for the sake of argument that Puno's action will need the approval of President Arroyo, the President cannot be sued because she enjoys immunity from suit."

Puno should be fired

Santiago said the judge should give Puno 24 hours to explain why he caused the transfer without court authority.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said that if it was Puno who ordered Smith transferred to US custody, "the guy should be fired."

"It is also a raw deal against our oppressed people," added Salonga, who in 1991 led the Senate in voting down an extension of the RP-US bases treaty.

Salonga said that he was informed of the plan to transfer Smith to the embassy as early as a week or two ago.

"I alerted Makati Mayor (Jejomar) Binay against the possibility that (Smith) may possibly be taken out by the American Embassy in connivance with the Philippine government," he said.

Told of the government's legal opinion that Smith was transferred in accord with Pozon's decision that he be transferred to a mutually agreed upon place of detention, Salonga said the government lawyers failed to read the latter part of Pozon's decision.

"It said 'until further orders of this court,'" Salonga said.

INQUIRER PHOTO

'MIDNIGHT DEAL?' Sprung from the Makati City Jail close to midnight Friday, Smith is now at the US Embassy compound where he can indeed welcome the new year in his new digs.

The militant group Sanlakas said the move was tantamount to treason on the part of the President.

"(Ms Arroyo), who authorized the transfer of Smith to US custody, must be held responsible for this. She already has betrayed Rizal and the Filipino people," Sanlakas president Wilson Fortaleza said. He was referring to Ms Arroyo's speech on Rizal Day Dec. 30, 2002 that she was not running for office to unite the nation.

"The surreptitious release of US Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, in the middle of the night at that, to the custody of the US, despite pending litigation in Philippine courts, is not only a violation of the Constitution, but also a complete disregard and disrespect for the judicial branch including the Supreme Court," sa[illegible] the lawyers group Counsels for the Defense Liberties.

"It is not only a contempt of court, but treachery that signals the complete breakdown of the rule of law," it added in a statment.

US flag burned

Angered by the removal of Smith from Philippine custody, scores of Filipino leftists burned a US flag and condemned Ms Arroyo as a traitor who should be impeached.

About 80 militants set the American flag on fire near the heavily guarded US Embassy, yelling "Oust GMA, junk VFA." Some carried placards that read: "Stop rape of our women, stop rape of the justice system."

Riot police pushed the protesters back and unsuccessfully tried to arrest some in a brief scuffle. The protesters left without further incident.

Migrante International, an alliance of militant overseas Filipinos and their families, called on the Senate to conduct a full investigation into Smith's transfer as well as on the VFA to pave the way for its abrogation.

'Arrogant treachery'

"Clearly the move was upon Arroyo's orders. Her arrogant treachery against the Filipino people knows no bounds. She is guilty of violating the Constitution, trampling on our sovereignty and desecrating our dignity as a people," said Connie Bragas-Regalado, Migrante International chair.

Along with the President, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and all others responsible for the "diabolical move" should be held criminally liable, Regalado said.

"They expose themselves anew as little more than puppets and mouthpieces of the US," she added.

Washington has demanded custody of Smith, saying his detention violated the VFA, which governs the conduct of US troops in the Philippines.

Smith has appealed his rape conviction and the accord provides that any accused US serviceman shall remain in US custody until all judicial proceedings are exhausted.

Judge Pozon argued he should remain at the Makati jail because the provision in the bilateral accord did not apply after a conviction.

The Philippine departments of foreign affairs and justice have backed the US position. Still, the United States canceled next year's annual joint military exercise with the Philippines because of the custody dispute. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

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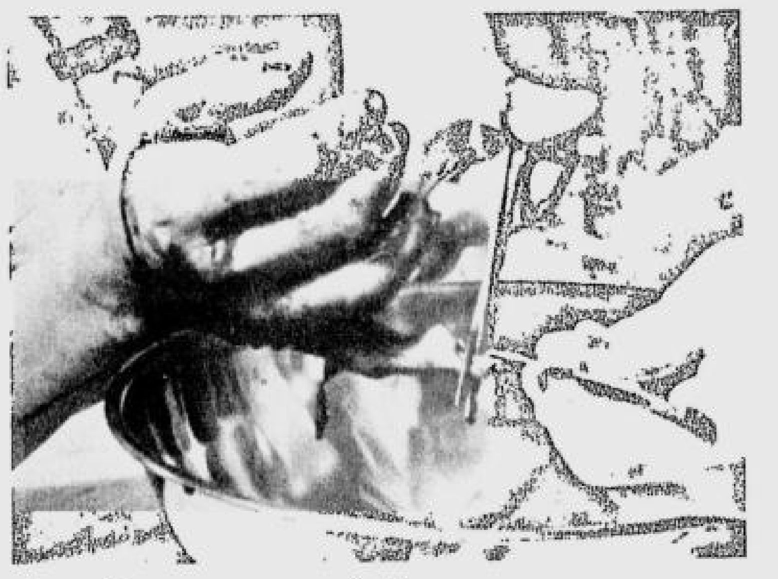

Acting stupid

EDITORIAL

FORREST GUMP'S LONG-SUFFERING MOTHER got it right: Stupid is as stupid does. How else explain the inevitable procession of bloodied victims, many of them in severe pain from self-inflicted injuries, to the country's emergency rooms every New Year's Eve?

Without fail, the most avoidable cause of injury known to medical science rears its explosive head as the old year winds down and the new calendar begins. What is worse, firecracker accidents and similar mishaps seem to follow an accelerated timetable: They do not wait until the New Year countdown to take their often deadly toll.

According to the Department of Health, in the week from Dec. 21 to 27, a total of 173 firecracker-related accidents were reported throughout the entire country. This chilling total is up a staggering 120 percent from the same period last year.

How can this happen, in the so-called Age of Information, when consumers and citizens are supposed to be more informed, more aware, more alert?

The answer must lie, in large part, in that Gumptian definition of stupidity: One is stupid not because one is slow, but because one acts stupidly.

It is important to emphasize that some of the victims are innocent—people who happen to be in the wrong place at the exact time a wayward bullet rediscovers the law of gravity or who are in the vicinity when an explosive device demonstrates, all over again, the continuing potency of Murphy's Law.

But many of the victims have only themselves to blame. Otherwise upright citizens, sensible people, at this time of the year they throw caution to the Siberian cold front and undertake unnecessary risks.

In many ways, risking an explosive welcome for the new year is a lot like gambling; otherwise reasonable people calculate they can beat the odds. The problem is, the risks are never worth it. Again, an example from gambling is apropos: Is it ever worth it to gamble, say, one's hard-earned house? The same thing with the big-bang enthusiasts: Is it ever worth it to risk limb or, sometimes, even life itself?

The answer should be a clear "No," but stupid is as stupid does. Many believe bad things happen to other people, so even very intelligent revelry-makers act as though the risks do not apply to them (at least until they become "other people"). Others put too much faith in their vendor's claims of safety or in the alleged improvement in explosives technology.

Consider this year's noisemaker of choice: the "Boga," an improvised cannon using PVC pipes and requiring denatured alcohol. It looks safe, both easy on the eyes and easy to use. According to the DOH, however, it is already the leading cause of firecracker-related injuries this year, with 30 cases reported. (Compare these statistics with those of the usual suspects: piccolo, 23; five-star, 22; whistle bomb, 15; triangle, 14.)

It is not only the users who act stupidly; the makers and the vendors can be fatally careless too. Just yesterday, a 29-year-old worker in Dagupan City died when a pile of firecrackers exploded inside his house; the explosion burned his house down and three others, and injured four neighbors. Last week, an accident involving firecrackers on sale inside a department store in Ormoc City gutted the building and killed 25 innocents.

All these should be enough to convince reasonable, intelligent people to avoid explosive devices during tonight's revelry, but unfortunately, tragically, stupid is as stupid does.

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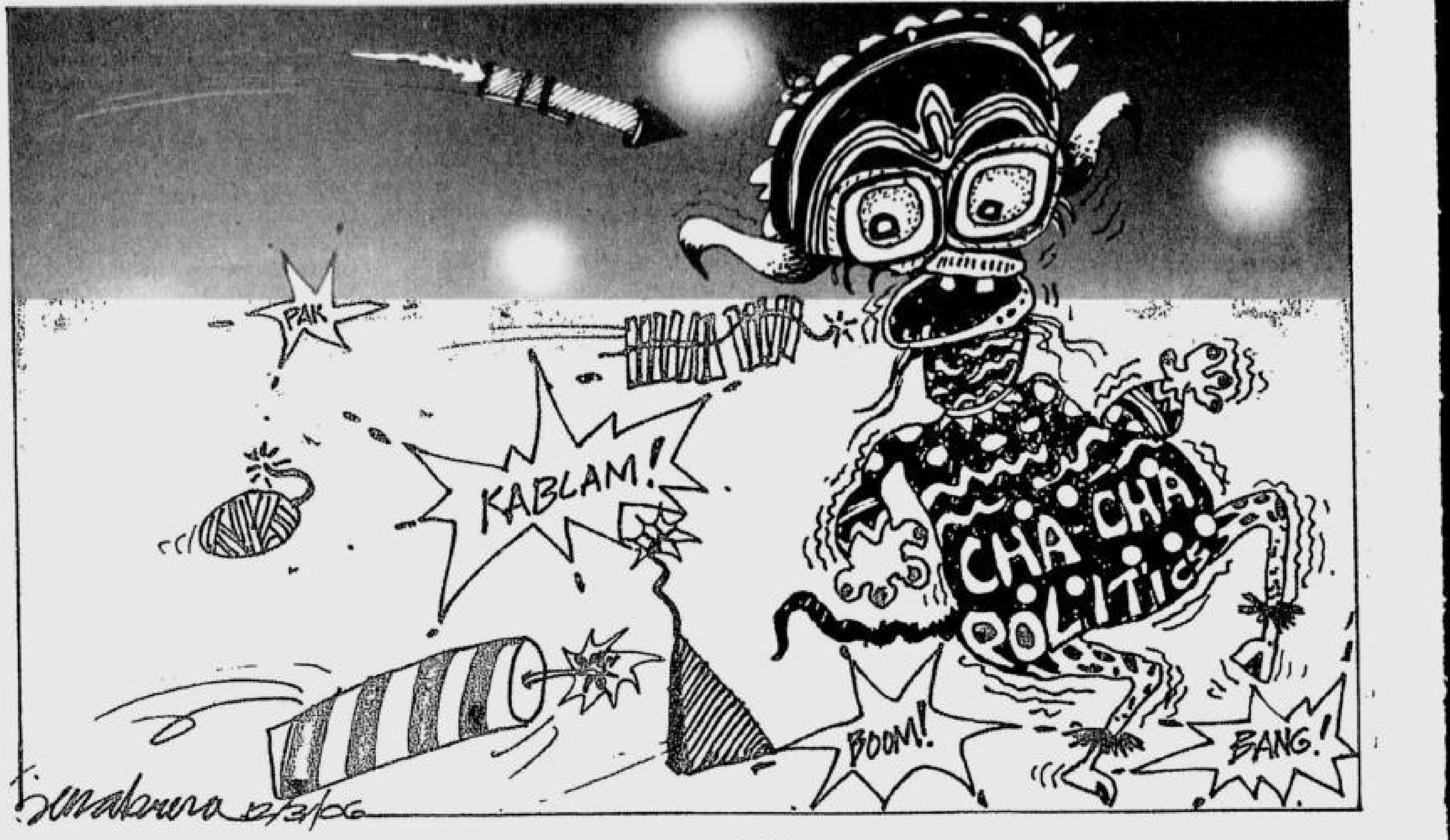
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BOOM!
BANG!

Laws and flaws

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

QUO VADIS, DOMINE? IT WAS NOT A QUESTION but a reproof. Upon hearing it, Saul, the Roman centurion who was a ruthless persecutor of the Christians, changed to Paul and became their leader and defender. His conversion is one of the inspiring lessons in the Bible of how a repentant sinner can reform and turn his wickedness into virtue.

This lesson teaches nations too and their governments. Including the Filipino people and their pathetic and apathetic government.

The year ending this midnight will be remembered for the natural calamities and manmade maledictions that afflicted our country in 2006. These included the Milenyo and the Reming typhoons that devastated the lives and properties of thousands of victims; the oil spill that impoverished many of our fishermen; the accidental death of new-born infants in a private hospital and the poisoning of pupils in a public school; the usual bank robberies and hold-ups in broad daylight; the startling number of killings mostly of activists and politicians; and the unmitigated violence of the insurgents and terrorists that continued to disturb the peace and order of our country. These were among many other happenings that impaired the safety and serenity of our once contented land.

Many of these unfortunate events can be blamed on the government for its failure or neglect, mostly deliberate for suspicious motives, in enforcing the law. On the whole, our laws provide sufficient protection to the people and promotion of the general welfare, but only on paper; it is their enforcement that is erratic and inadequate. This is particularly true of the ineffective prevention and punishment of crime, as evidenced by the rash of unsolved murders, tax evasions, election irregularities, malversations, and other easily soluble offenses.

The riddle of the Garci tapes—if riddle it was—could have been easily solved if President Macapagal-Arroyo had not arbitrarily prevented the exposure of the guilty parties for her own reasons. Jocelyn Bolante was allowed or ordered to escape from the legislative investigation of the misuse of the P728-million fertilizer fund and is now in an American jail beyond the reach of our authorities. Norberto Gonzales concealed the identity of the parties, probably foreigners, who paid the retainer fee in the questionable Venable contract but was only briefly punished for contempt of the Senate. In these and other cases, the applicable laws were cleverly evaded despite President Arroyo's constitutional duty to "ensure that the laws be faithfully executed."

Her disrespect for the Constitution was overruled by the Supreme Court in decisions that denounced her PP 1017, EO 464, and GO No. 5. Her Calibrated Preemptive Response that replaced the policy of maximum tolerance of disorders in rallies was nullified for violation of the Bill of Rights. Her interference with valid legislative investigations was prohibited as contrary to the doctrine of separation of powers.

Her most disastrous defeat so far was in Lambino v. Commission on Elections which outlawed the initiative to revise the Constitution. The chief justice himself led the majority that dismissed the petition. As the foremost leader of the lost movement, she expected but did not get the support of even some justices she had appointed to the Court. The people hailed the judgment, which she gracefully accepted; more than that, she ordered her followers to retreat and urged the nation to move on.

Recently, however, she began humming a different tune. Not surprisingly, she is now saying she will renew the initiative because of the urgent need for it to change our form of government as the solution to our country's problems. This recalls the ugly memory of her promise before the Rizal monument in 2003 that she would not run in the 2004 presidential election but did.

The preponderant public opinion is that the solution to our country's problems is not the change of the government but the change of the President. We do need change, but it must be for the better, not the worst. The argument that the replacement of our present government will create an instant Utopia is downright stupid. It is like painting a rotting house to make it habitable.

It is true that the Constitution must be re-examined and improved. But we must do this without the sordid influence of politicians whose avarice for illicit power and embezzled wealth is the root cause of our nation's decay. That outrageous flaw was recently demonstrated by the scalawags in the House of Representatives who attempted to railroad the establishment of a constitutional convention without the Senate through the illegal amendment of their own rules.

It is such scandalous conduct of official scoundrels that the people must guard against in the revision and improvement of our fundamental law. Without our unflagging vigilance, the Constitution will be a writ of abject surrender. We will find ourselves imprisoned once again by our own complaisance in another regime where liberty will be a flouted word and the public welfare will be an empty excuse for private rapacity.

Meantime, let us keep cool and welcome the new 2007. May it make us, under God, happy, prosperous and free!

We are family

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

THE STORY IS TOLD ABOUT TWO CLASSMATES who met each other after so many years. After the initial how-have-you-beens, their conversation focused on their families, particularly their husbands. The first one said: "*Si* Jimmy, *sumakabilang buhay na* (Jimmy has gone to the next life already)." And the second one said: "*Si* Robert *naman, sumakabilang bahay na* (Robert has gone to the next house already)."

* * *

Today is the Feast of the Holy Family. In today's Gospel (Lk. 2, 41-52) we hear of Joseph and Mary's deep love and concern for their child Jesus. They go back together to Jerusalem to look for Him when he was lost at the temple. If only parents focus on their children and not so much on their own personal and often selfish agenda, a lot of them will still try to find each other and a lot of families will still be together.

* * *

Someone once said that the best gift a father can give to his children is to love their mother, and vice-versa. If a child experiences loving parents, he or she grows up with confidence and can become a loving person and parent as well. Parents, never underestimate your tremendous influence on the lives of your children.

* * *

By the way, there is no such thing as a perfect family—or a perfect relationship, for that matter. There are only real people, with real problems, who somehow make the decision to stick it out with each other, no matter what.

Dreams do get shattered, and relationships do get broken. What is the bottom line? If you can honestly say to yourself, and if you can see yourself saying to God when you come face to face with Him, "Lord, I have done my very best for this person, for this relationship," then be at peace. God Himself will understand, no matter what has happened in the meantime.

* * *

One of the greatest blessings in life is that I was born of Guillermo and Concepcion Orbos. They were not rich, but they were generous in love and good examples. For Papa and Mama, parenthood was a God-given mission. That's why prayer life was a big part of our family. We prayed the rosary as a family every night. They taught us early on to call on the Lord, obey the Lord and not displease Him. Not only by word, but more so, by example, they taught us integrity, generosity, humility and patience. Indeed, the family is the first school of love, and parents are its very first teachers.

* * *

I think I was about 10 years old when I made a conscious decision to start reciprocating my parents' love for me. I saw them hard up in so many ways, and I promised myself not to give them headaches or heartaches. Life was hard enough for them, I thought, so I decided to make them happy and make them proud of me. That was many years ago, and I have kept my promise. After Papa died in 1987, I repeated that promise to take care of Mama, and make her happy. Unless and until a child makes a conscious decision to go into "payback" mode, then he or she never really grows up. And so it is that there are 50-year-olds who still are a burden to their parents, expecting the world to understand them or to bear with them.

* * *

As we face the New Year ahead of us, let us take note that the first day of the New Year is the Feast of Mary, the Mother of God. Let us consecrate 2007 to our Blessed Mother who assures us that she is always with us, always near us, and so we need not fear.

* * *

What lies up ahead? What will happen to our families this 2007? What will happen to our country? We do not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future in His hands, and that's enough. Let us do our very best, and to God we leave the rest. Fear is useless, what is needed is trust.

* * *

How shall we face the year ahead? Let us learn from Fr. Peter Michael, SVD, a 94-year-old missionary priest now living in our Retirement House in Christ the King Seminary. I see him every day in the garden, tilling the soil, arranging the fallen branches, raking the dead leaves. After the recent typhoons, his garden was a mess, but he kept at it again. Now, his little garden is in order again, because he goes on; he does not give up, and he does everything, one day at a time. Yes, God's grace is sufficient, and let's proceed with much love and confidence, one day at a time.

* * *

Here's wishing that the New Year will be a better year for all of us in all aspects, in Jesus' name. Amen!

* * *

Please don't forget that our God is a God of surprises. Perhaps, it would be good to add "Surprise us, Lord!" to our usual prayers and to expect many surprises unfold before us. May we never stop believing like a child, because children we all are, belonging to the family of God. A happy and a better New Year to all!

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, remind us that we are brothers and sisters, and we are family. Amen.

Helping our country in 2007

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

A YEAR AND A HALF AGO, I WROTE ABOUT A booklet which was just making the rounds in Metro Manila. I said that every Filipino who loves his country should get hold of this primer, read it carefully and then put into practice what it suggests on how to help the Philippines. All the activities mentioned are practical and doable for ordinary Filipinos. You just have to love your country and your fellow countrymen. As Fr. Ruben M. Tanseco, S.J. put it: "To love our country and our people with deep passion and compassion—this is what can make our nation great."

The author of the booklet "12 Little Things Every Filipino Can Do To Help Our Country," Alex Ledesma Lacson, is a member of PMA Class 1987 and a graduate of the UP College of Law, Class 1996. Father Tanseco describes Alex as both a prophet and a patriot. He is ahead of the times but "his persistence and courage as a 'voice in the wilderness' will one day, turn his dreams into a nationwide, living miracle."

In one of the forewords to the booklet, Eugenia Duran Apostol, chair of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power and a recent Time Magazine Asian Heroes Awardee said: "I had never met Alex Lacson—nor read him—until he sent the manuscript for this book to my house." After reading the manuscript, she made a few notes of her own about the book. Some of them which form part of the foreword are:

1. Don't buy this book because you will be bothered by it.

2. Don't read it because it will change you.

3. Don't keep it because it will bore a hole in your conscience.

4. Don't give it away because it will never be returned.

* * *

Just to refresh your memory, these are the 12 little things one can do to help the nation.

1. **Follow traffic rules.** Why is that the most important? The answer is simple. Traffic rules are the simplest of our laws. If we learn to follow them, it will be the lowest form of national discipline which we can develop. Since it is totally without monetary cost, it should be easy for us to comply with, and therefore should provide a good start.

2. **Whenever you pay for anything, always ask for an official receipt.** A seller who does not issue an official receipt when you buy a product may or may not remit the tax to the government. There is no record of the sale, and the tax that you already pay may not be remitted to the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

3. **Do not buy smuggled goods.** Buy local, buy Filipino. It may not be good economics to buy, 100 percent, local products. What I suggest is for you to take a 50-50 buying attitude. This means that we must develop the attitude of using 50 percent of our budget for local products and the other 50 percent for imported choices.

4. **When you talk to others, especially foreigners, speak positively of our race and our country.** This is best addressed to the rich and middle class in our country, who have contact with the outside world. It is they who talk to, dine or deal with foreigners either here or abroad. It is what they say and do which creates the impression about us among foreigners.

5. **Respect your traffic officer, policemen, soldiers and other public servants—there is nothing like the power of respect.** It makes a person proud, it makes one feel honorable. At the same time, courtesy to others is good manners. It is class and elegance and kindness. It is seeing the value and dignity in the other man. It is, in fact, a mark of a most profound education.

6. **Do not litter. Dispose your garbage properly. Segregate. Recycle. Conserve.** As Louise Armstrong says in his song: "I see trees and green, red roses, too, I see them bloom for me and you and I think to myself, what a wonderful world."

7. **Support your Church.**

8. **During election, do your solemn duty.** Honesty, more than a masteral or doctorate degree, is what gives credibility. And credibility is essential because it is a leader's link to the people. It is what makes the people look to one direction, follow a common vision, and perform a uniform act. In short, credibility is what makes people follow the leader.

9. **Pay your employees well.** No exercise is better for the human heart than to reach down and lift someone else up. These truly define a successful life. Not of our earthly possessions, but of how many times we have to show love and kindness to others.

10. **Pay your taxes.** In 2003, P83 billion was collected from individual income taxes. But 91 percent of this amount came from salaried workers in the government and private sectors, people who had no choice, since their income taxes were withheld mandatorily. Only P7 billion of the P83 billion came from businessmen and professionals like doctors, lawyers, accountants and architects, among others.

11. **Adopt a scholar or adopt a poor child.** You can make a difference in the world of children.

12. **Be a good parent. Teach your kids to follow the law and to love the country.** Today's children will someday rule and lead this world. But whether they will be bad rulers or good leaders will depend largely on how we raise them today. Our future is in the heart and minds of our children.

* * *

Last year, when the booklet was just beginning to circulate, Alex was receiving one or two invitations a month to speak before various groups of students, Rotarians and members of different organizations. Today, Alex averages from four to five speaking engagements per week all over the country and even abroad. Early next year, he will be coming out with a second booklet, this one on why we should be proud to be a Filipino.

A special hometown treat

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IN THE YEARS WHEN WE WENT HOME TO MY mother's hometown of Alaminos, Pangasinan for Christmas, I would wake up on Christmas morning looking forward to a special treat.

This was the *binungey*, glutinous rice cooked inside a length of bamboo with a topping of desiccated coconut on one end. A length of thick bamboo would be whacked in half and since it was a special occasion, we would each get half a bamboo vessel, the split bamboo serving as a fragrant, if wobbly bowl for the treat that was to follow.

I would pour an entire cup of viscous hot *tsokolate* over the cooked glutinous rice, the sweetness of the chocolate balancing the rice's gooey blandness with just the right hint of saltiness. Other family members, eschewing the mess created by the chocolate, would spoon sugar onto the hollow created by the bamboo node and then proceed to dip the glutinous rice, spoonful by spoonful, into the sugar.

Others, following the customary pairing of *suman* and mangoes, would lay sweet golden mango cheeks beside the split bamboo, combining each spoonful of rice with a bit of mango.

Thus were our Christmas mornings celebrated: with a hint of sweetness and richness, all of us seated around the breakfast table partaking of a rare treat because *binungey* in those days was made only on special occasions.

This was because, we were told, *binungey*, a delicacy and method of cooking unique to Alaminos, was quite difficult to make and required hours of tedious preparation and cooking. And so we were grateful for the onset of Christmas because it would often be accompanied by a taste of the rare and relatively expensive *binungey*.

* * *

WHEN we first sat down to plan the publication of a book on the town's history and the family lineage, my sister Joni suggested a feature on the food of Alaminos, the dishes, *kakanin* and delicacies that were unique to our hometown and that we had all enjoyed in our childhood.

***Binungey*, of course, topped the list. We had all heard about the process of preparing it, but none of us had really seen how it was made. So soon after Christmas, my husband Pie and I, with my cousins Ditas Gavino and Mila Labayen Atienza, made the trip from Manila to Alaminos to visit the hometown and do some research for the book. Before then, I had talked to our cousin Lulu Garcia, who lives in Alaminos, and asked her to make preparations for interviews and pictorials on the various culinary specialties of the town.**

When I asked how *binungey* came to be, Lulu said she had no idea, but that the root word for the delicacy comes from the Pangasinan word "*nungey*," meaning "cooked in bamboo." *Binungey*, it turned out, was the specialty of a single barrio in Alaminos, now known as Barangay San Jose. "It's made in other places," said Reggie Mendez, Lulu's household caretaker, "but it doesn't taste as good as the ones made in San Jose."

* * *

MAKING inquiries, Reggie discovered that Aida Baton, who was looking after the beach rest house where we were staying, hailed from San Jose and knew of families engaged in *binungey*-making.

No longer is *binungey*-making confined to Christmas and other special occasions, we were told. These days, *binungey* is made every day and is available at the town market. Preparations for cooking *binungey* start near midnight or later, so that the *binungey* could be brought to market early in the morning and don't spoil until the end of the day.

So it was that we found ourselves near midnight following the winding course of a concrete road that ended abruptly in a rough footpath. When Reggie and Aida made inquiries at one house, they were told that *binungey* cooking had not yet begun, though the men offered to bring us to the house of one *binungey* maker by the name of Edwin Humilde.

We followed the men through a cleared path that rose and fell through a hillside, until we reached a clearing surrounded by a bamboo grove and where a pile of bamboo, cut into "cooking" vessels and trimmed of the bark, lay on the ground.

* * *

ACCORDING to one of our guides, Alfonso Pansoy Jr., *binungey*-making starts with choosing young bamboo stalks and cutting each piece just below the node, to form a convenient cooking vessel roughly one foot in length. The bamboo vessels are then laid, standing up, in rows bordered by wire (to keep them upright). Each vessel is then filled with *malagkit* rice which had been soaked in water for two hours previously and drained. The maker then pours coconut cream mixed with some salt over the *malagkit*, making sure the liquid rises about half an inch over the rice. He then takes the desiccated coconut from which the cream had been squeezed and covers the *malagkit* mixture, "to make sure that no dirt or ashes mix with the rice."

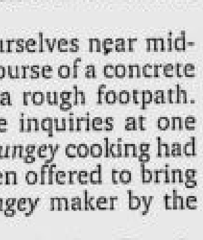
Bamboo shavings are then laid on each side of a row of *binungey* and set afire. "This is the most difficult part of *binungey*-making," said Pansoy, because the maker has to ensure that the fire never gets out of control. "If it's too hot, the bamboo will burn and the rice will form *tutong* (burnt rice), and if it doesn't get hot enough, the rice will remain uncooked." The maker thus has to keep controlling the amount of kindling that goes into the fire, until by sight and timing (usually from two to three hours), he can tell when the *binungey* is ready.

When I asked if they followed any superstitions regarding *binungey*-making, Pansoy's companion joked: "When people watch how *binungey* is made and then don't buy the finished product, that's bad."

Sadly, we didn't have the time or energy to hang around until the *binungey* was done, but we promised to buy them from Edwin's wife Prescy at the market early the next morning. Knowing how this delicacy is made has made it all the more special and tasty for us!

A long and healthful life

PUBLIC LIVES



Randy David

AT A CERTAIN AGE, ALMOST ALL CONVERSATIONS turn to diets, disorders, and health matters. The starting point could be politics, or sports, the economy, or family—it doesn't matter. Talk inevitably drifts to the one thing we usually spend a lifetime abusing, and a fortune desperately recovering: health.

For some it starts as early as 40. But normally, it happens at around 50, typically in the course of a routine medical check-up. In my case, it came after a visit to my urologist. He told me of my unusually high PSA level. He ordered another one done after a few days, and a third one after two weeks, preferably in another hospital. PSA stands for Prostate Specific Antigen, a blood test that indicates if a patient may be at risk for prostate cancer. I had then just turned 50, and had taken a sabbatical leave from the university and a break from TV hosting in order to accept a visiting professorship at the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

My doctor gave me some medicine to ease urination, and told me to drink a lot of water especially while I was traveling. You should be all right, he assured me. Yet I distinctly remember a sinking feeling throughout my stay in Mexico. My father died when he was 60, and I thought that if I inherited his genetic clock, I should have at least 10 years more of productive life. Now, suddenly, I felt as if I was staring at the end.

I suppose everyone goes through this midlife rite of denial, acceptance, and resolve. I became more conscious of what I ate. I resumed my daily brisk walks. And I read all the books about prostate cancer that I could lay my hands on. Friends suggested that I take zinc and an herb called *saw palmetto*. My sisters in the United States sent me bottles of assorted antioxidants and cranberry soft gels. I don't know if these supplements were of any use, but my PSA wonderfully stayed at safe levels. I've stopped taking anything else except Vitamin C and virgin coconut oil. I still drink a lot of water throughout the day, starting with a whole liter first thing in the morning to flush my kidneys.

I'm turning 61 soon, and over the last six years, I have felt well enough to indulge my passion in motorcycles. On most weekends, I ride with a group of buddies whose average age is in the mid-50s. I tell myself that maybe if I lead a reasonably healthful life, I could look forward to riding till I am 75. I draw inspiration from the oldest in our group, the 76-year-old Pete Cariquitan, who rides a big-bore BMW 1150R. He says he hopes to ride till he is past 80.

Are some people genetically gifted to live longer? Or is a long and healthful life within everyone's reach? These questions have been answered in a variety of ways through the ages.

"Discourses on the Sober Life" by the Italian writer Luigi Cornaro (1468-1566) is a famous book that deals precisely with these questions. It was well-circulated in Europe until the 19th century as an authoritative reference on healthful living. The durable life of its author became the most convincing proof of the validity of its claims. Cornaro lived till he was 98. I was curious about the prescriptions he made because Nietzsche had used his writing as an example of erroneous thinking. I recently found Cornaro's Discourses in the following link: http://www.soilandhealth.org/02/0201hyglibcat/020105cornaro.html

It is a fascinating document, and I think Nietzsche was unduly harsh in his judgment. Cornaro said the secret to a long and healthful life is quite simple and can be summarized as follows: To eat and drink only that which agrees with your body, to eat and drink only as much as your stomach can digest with ease, and to avoid extremes of heat and cold and too much fatigue. Cornaro was a great believer in the control of one's appetite, and argued that the quantity of food one leaves on the table after eating prolongs one's life more than what one actually consumes. He said: "Men should live up to the simplicity dictated by nature, which teaches us to be content with little, and accustom ourselves to eat no more than is absolutely necessary to support life, remembering that all excess causes disease and leads to death."

Nietzsche thought Cornaro had confused consequence with cause. "The worthy Italian gentleman saw in his diet the cause of his long life; whereas the precondition for a long life—extraordinarily slow metabolism, low consumption—was the cause of his meager diet." In short, he would have fallen ill if he ate more. But, Cornaro knew this. He precisely preached that everyone should listen to one's body. What agrees with one body may not agree with another. And indeed, individuals require different quantities of food depending on their bodily constitutions. As a matter of principle, Cornaro believed that in order to live long and healthy, one must eat and drink below one's appetite. What is good to the palate, he said, may not always agree with the stomach.

He himself kept to a strict diet of no more than 12 ounces of solid food (consisting mainly of bread, soup and egg yolk) and 14 ounces of wine per day. He immediately fell ill when, on the prodding of his family, he raised his quota by two ounces each of food and wine. As one gets older, he wrote, one must reduce food intake because the stomach burns less and loses its heat with the passing years.

This 16th-century regimen may seem quaint and needlessly austere today, but it is useful to keep it in mind especially during the holidays.

Happy New Year!

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Spectacular, spectacular

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista

MY FRIEND DAVID AND I WATCH A COUPLE OF MOVIES together something like twice a month. Two steps out of the cinema, we'd be talking about the general merits of the movie, and the relative attractiveness of the lead players. By the time we get to the car, we'd be arguing about the plot, the structure, the logical chain of events—mostly about the story's believability. And by the time we're flying down the road going home—that's when his driving gets frighteningly erratic with each point he makes—our argument would have evolved into a battle royale, and it feels as if I'm defending a matter of life and death. He'd say that dancing penguins managing to get a bill passed to protect the environment is ridiculous; I say dancing penguins are ridiculous to begin with. And so forth.

Of course, David and I argue about mostly everything—being debate teammates for years sort of makes screaming normal conversation. But I'm beginning to think it's not fair to subject movies to standards of logical plausibility, penguins or no penguins. This is the Philippines after all, and here, real and realistic seem to be two completely different things. Realistic would mean logical, possible, an event that can be imagined probable when it comes to the human situation. It's realistic to believe that going to college means getting educated, that getting into a taxi will get you where you want to go, that, for example, the wives of tyrants and corrupt men will be shamed by their husbands' actions.

But in the Philippines, we defy the standards of realism. What is real to us are things that in fiction would be insults to the gullibility of the reader. Even dancing penguins are more reasonable. I don't know if this has always been the given—maybe it's a Filipino trait, this love for melodrama, for great, grand gestures, and scenes out of telenovelas, or maybe it's because I've only just started reading more than the comics' section of the paper. The news has become more entertaining than entertainment, and sometimes, I'm not even certain which is which.

There's a senator who goes into a long, angry tirade at not being nominated for chief justice—excuse me, not angry, but irate, foaming at the mouth, homicidal, suicidal, humiliated, debased, degraded, nauseated. They say justice is supposed to be blind—no one said they were going to try to render us deaf too. I'm sure spelling quizzes across the country featured the same words that week.

There's a journalist who tosses water in the face of another grandstander, then decides to publicly pour a bottle of water on himself. He then nonchalantly says that he does not regret his initial assault, and I'm left thinking of a reaction more intellectual than "huh?" There are congressmen who attempt parliamentary sleight of hand, and the people who marvel at their heroism. There are people who have disappeared, and men who still claim that these cases are "alleged." The wives of former tyrants happily pose in magazines hawking jewelry, while their children walk around in Congress. There are students who throw rotten eggs and justify the act as a moment of passion—passion that must have lasted long enough to buy the eggs in the first place.

There's a difference between fiction and reality—we require that fiction make sense. Reality mostly doesn't.

There are 80 million of us walking around the country today, 80 million people, each with a story, each story a grand epic, with heroes and villains and damsels in distress, each person's life a complex plot with its own tragedies and triumphs. Maybe, that's why there's all this melodrama in the news—all that grandstanding, the raised voices and accusations and that seeming tendency toward mannerless behavior—it is a claim for attention, a bid for consideration in a country whose people are staggering under their own tragedies. And, maybe, we're sick of that sort of drama too—which explains why it is horror and fantasy making waves in the box office and in the small screen. It's more rewarding to watch fairies battling ghouls. At least, there's no argument on who the bad guys are.

Every day, there seems to be some other great tragedy brewing—and I don't mean the horrific natural catastrophes that are plaguing the country this year. It may be true that the Filipino has always loved drama, but I'm guessing it becomes harder by the day to make people pay attention to the various other dramas. In 1986, Edsa was a turning point, a milestone, a monumental first—today, the threat of another Edsa doesn't even elicit commentary. Drama loses its novelty when it doesn't seem so dramatic compared to everything else. Ken Keyes once said that "the ability to see your drama clearly is to be liberated from it." Maybe that's what we need at the end of the year, a fresh eye, a step backward, and an attempt to scrape away the fluff from the fundamental. Who knows, things may actually get done.

Tonight will be New Year's Eve, and I wonder how anyone can top the stunning extravaganza that is 2006. What's next? Elephants! Bohemians! Indians and courtesans! Acrobats and juggling bears! Exotic girls! Fire eaters! GMA in a tutu!

There are scriptural arguments that claim 2007 will mark the end of human life as we know it, that a comet will come bringing the end of the world. GMA predicts "permanent political and economic stability is on the horizon." If I had the money to bet, I'd stake the cash on Armageddon.

Online astrologers offer "the most accurate predictions" with regard to love, children and career, with a 30 percent discount for all orders made before Dec. 31.

As the fee, even with the 30 percent discount, is beyond my paycheck, I'll hazard my own prediction: and that is, that politicians will be swinging their hips to Wowowee's boom-tarat-tarat in the campaign trail.

* * *

For comments, just text: PM REBEL name, age, location, message then send to 2948 for Globe/Sun and 3940 for Smart. E-mail at pat.evangelista@gmail.com

THEY SAID

Amazing democracy

"You know, I think an interesting construct that General (Peter) Pace uses is, 'We're not winning, we're not losing.' There's been some very positive developments. And you take a step back and look at progress in Iraq, you say, well, it's amazing—constitutional democracy in the heart of the Middle East, which is a remarkable development in itself."

—President George W. Bush on the US war in Iraq

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TALK of the TOWN

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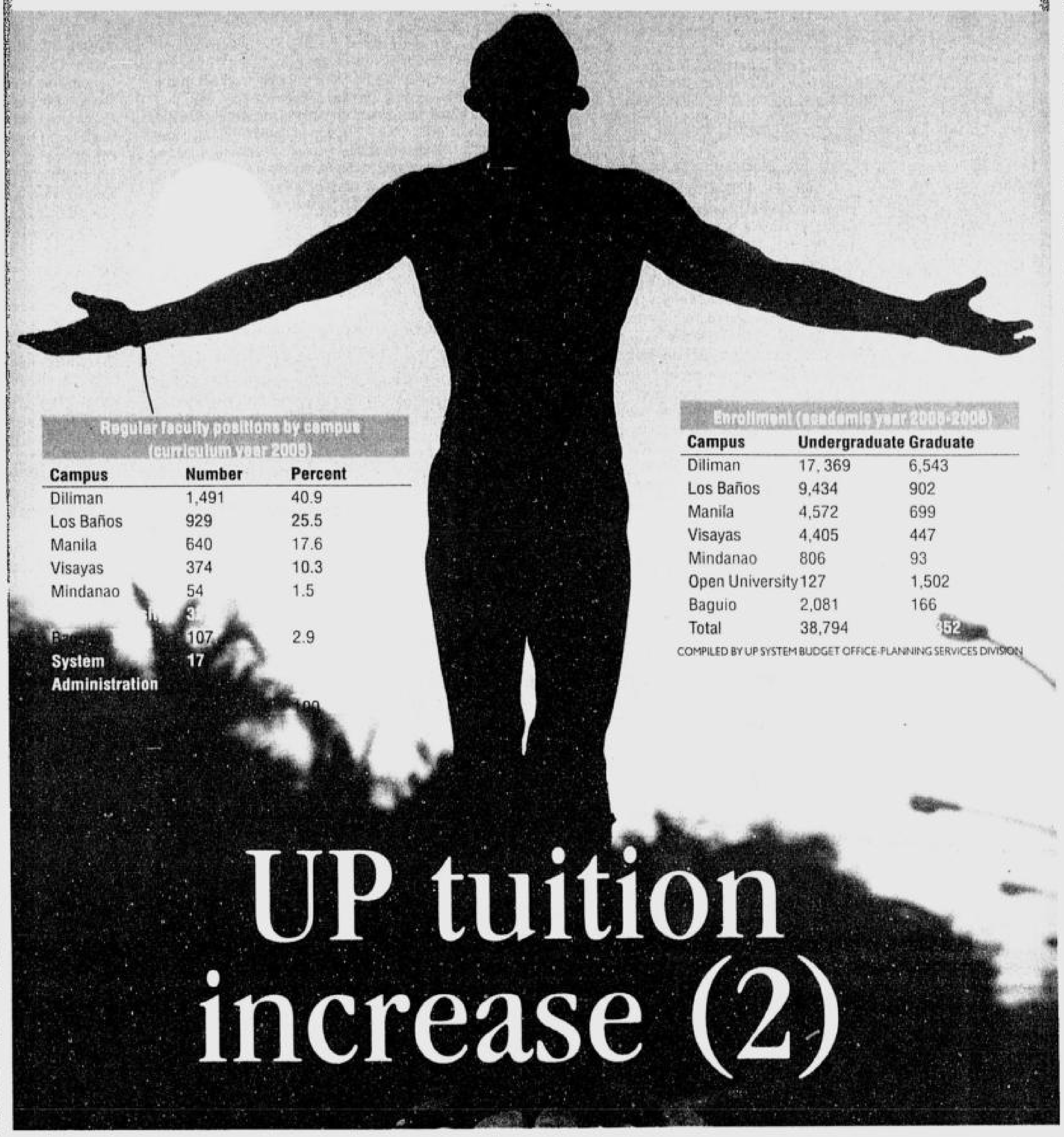

UP tuition increase (2)

In-depth study, further review needed

By Roland G. Simbulan

THE BOARD OF REGENTS UNANIMOUSLY approved on Dec. 15 a revised Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program (STFAP).

As a result, tuition and other fees for incoming freshmen and transferees starting schoolyear 2007 will increase from P300 to up to P1,500 per unit.

Unknown to many, including those on the BOR, implementing the higher tuition and other fees through the revised STFAP mechanism recommended by the Atanacio committee, presents many highly questionable features, which must be addressed.

> Unknown to many, including those on the Board of Regents, implementing the higher tuition and other fees through the revised STFAP mechanism recommended by the Atanacio committee, presents many highly questionable features, which must be addressed

This is the reason it could be claimed that the BOR may not have known what it approved as it was not properly informed. The BOR simply believed the rhetoric of UP President Emerlinda Roman and her officials that the new tuition rates were good for the students, UP and the nation.

Inconsistencies

The following points highlight the many inconsistencies in the new STFAP:

1. In determining who are eligible under STFAP, the university starts with the premise that the students and parents of STFAP applicants conceal or under-report their income or assets. (This is written in the Atanacio report. This statement convicts all applicants as sinners or liars without due process.)

Because of this prejudgment, methods were devised to determine the true income of the family. To do this, an income function was derived (Yj = Bj Xij + yiAij + ej).

For details, please read Appendix A—Estimating the income function—on page A-1 of the report by the Atanacio Committee to Review STFAP. *(See boxed story below)*

What are the questionable features of the components of the income function that must be studied further?

In Table 8.2 of the Atanacio report several assets were given multiplier coefficients to be able to put a monetary value.

For example, a television set has 0.1552188, washing machine 0.1302926, motorbike 0.1206098, car 0.1058442, and aircon 0.0752214.

First, if these coefficients are used as multiplier of the value of the assets listed above, what monetary value would they use? Washing machines and TV sets are fully depreciated after five years.

Second, how did they arrive at the value of the coefficients and test its applicability in real life?

Relevant to the STFAP, a car has a lower multiplier coefficient than a motorbike, which is the popular vehicle among the poorer people because it provides them with mobility at a cheaper price. Using a motorbike, however, is riskier than using a car.

More so, an aircon has only 0.0752214, and a TV set, 0.1552188. It is obvious that only richer families are using aircon in their houses.

Assets, which more or less could be classified as "luxuries," are given smaller multiplier coefficients, leading to a lower value that will be contributed to the predicted income.

Third, among occupational groups, a clerk has a higher multiplier coefficient (0.1340631) than a manager (0.117789). This means that the higher-paying occupations will have lower contributions to the predicted income due to their lower multiplier coefficients.

Poorer families will be having a bigger increase in predicted income due to the bigger multiplier coefficient.

2. Results and implications of using the income function

Based on STFAP data from 2003 to 2006, applying the income function used by the Atanacio committee consistently reduced the percentage of Bracket E awardees from 61-63 percent to 15-18 percent based on the predicted income.

Using the reported income as basis for classification, the percentage of Bracket C recipients was 20-21 percent. But when the income function was applied Bracket C became the dominant group of STFAP awardees, as they now comprised 52-57 percent.

There were more Bracket D awardees (27-30 percent) than Bracket E awardees (16 percent).

The contention that an income function eliminates not only biases or subjectivity in assessing the value of assets but also errors attributed to misdeclaration of income is mathematically correct.

But sheer math made many STFAP applicant families "richer" after a fraction of a minute of computer-aided calculations.

The result: They now have to pay P300 to P600 per unit plus full matriculation fees. But even those in the poorest group (Bracket E), became richer due to the income function. Their bracket moved to Bracket B—from nonpaying to paying P600 per unit plus miscellaneous fees.

Adopting the income function for estimating the income of STFAP applicants to determine their bracket succeeded in increasing the collectible tuition for UP. But is UP really doing justice to the students and not simply playing mathematics in the guise of unearthing the concealed or under-reported income and assets of the parents to collect more money in the form of tuition?

3. The maximum income as the ultimate basis of STFAP bracket

Estimates of income based on the income function do not end there. Some socioeconomic variables are given nominal value, which is added to the predicted income.

The increase, though small, pushed upward the bracketing of some STFAP awardees as shown in the simulated STFAP data from 2003 to 2006. It's important to point this out because the final bracket of STFAP awardees will be determined using the outcome of the three income classes—reported, predicted and maximum. The highest will be the basis for the final STFAP bracket.

Thus, the STFAP brackets B, C, D and E mean many complications. But adopting the procedures have succeeded in decreasing STFAP nonpaying grantees from 62 percent, if the reported income is the sole basis, to 14-15 percent using the predicted plus maximum income estimates.

The reliability of the estimates should be further validated and the income function for computing the predicted income must be further refined.

How correct are the multiplier coefficients that will declare that an applicant is rich, thus making him or her not deserving of being in Bracket E? We are human beings and imperfect! Should this be the way to commit errors!

4. Shared responsibility between the student and the applicant's parents, legal guardian or spouse

The intention of having the applicant's parents, legal guardian or spouse certify the truthfulness and completeness of the information that their son, daughter, dependent or spouse had furnished in the application, together with all the attached documents, is valid. But the statement "I authorize the university to conduct a bank credit investigation and send a fact-finding team to…"

For those who have nothing to hide, as the proponent may argue, have nothing to be afraid of. But the statement is also tantamount to surrendering one's individual privacy to UP. To some, this could be acceptable.

Right to privacy

How about the rest who are aware of their rights to privacy as one of the Bill of Rights enshrined in our Constitution? They may simply be scared of allowing UP to conduct bank credit investigations. As a result, they may not apply for STFAP.

Automatically, they will pay P1,000 per unit. Then, the objective of increasing UP income through higher tuition rates is attained. Is this the proper way of raising funds for UP, which is championing human rights and individual privacy?

5. "Those who can afford should pay more." This is the principle on which the tuition increase is based. It is difficult to argue against this. But what is the family income referred to in such a claim?

- Are the families with an annual income of P81,000 up to P 135,000 rich enough so that they shall now pay P300 per unit plus full miscellaneous fees? They are exempt from paying tuition in the previous STFAP.
- Are the families earning P135,001 a year or P11,250 a month rich enough to pay P600 per unit plus miscellaneous fees?

Again, it should be remembered that the reported annual income of P80,000 or P130,000 may increase 2 to 3 times when the assets are monetized under the income function.

(Simbulan is a professor and faculty regent, UP System and a member of the UP Academic Employees Union.)

Regular faculty positions by campus (curriculum year 2005)

Campus	Number	Percent
Diliman	1,491	40.9
Los Baños	929	25.5
Manila	640	17.6
Visayas	374	10.3
Mindanao	54	1.5
[illegible]	3[illegible]	[illegible]
B[illegible]	107	2.9
System Administration	17	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Enrollment (academic year 2005-2006)

Campus	Undergraduate	Graduate
Diliman	17, 369	6,543
Los Baños	9,434	902
Manila	4,572	699
Visayas	4,405	447
Mindanao	806	93
Open University	127	1,502
Baguio	2,081	166
Total	38,794	[illegible]52

COMPILED BY UP SYSTEM BUDGET OFFICE-PLANNING SERVICES DIVISION

Table 1: Existing and newly approved tuition structure

Feature	Newly approved	Existing
Base tuition	P1,000 per unit*	P300 per unit**
Number of STFAP brackets	5 (1 non-paying)	9 (5 nonpaying)
Tuition discounts	100, 70, 40 percent	100, 75, 50, 25 percent
Stipend per semester	P12,000	P6,750***
Highest income bracket tuition	1.5 times the base tuition	Base tuition

* APPLICABLE FEES IN BAGUIO, SAN FERNANDO, VISAYAS AND MINDANAO ARE 60 PERCENT OF THIS.
** APPLICABLE FEE IN LOS BAÑOS IS P250 PER UNIT, WHILE P200 FOR OTHER REGIONAL UNITS.
*** THIS IS AN AVERAGE FOR BRACKETS 1-4. THE AMOUNT STARTS AT P8,250 PER SEMESTER FOR BRACKET 1 AND DECLINES TO P4,500 PER SEMESTER FOR THOSE IN BRACKET 4.

[illegible]

Bracket	Annual family income	Per unit tuition Group I	Per unit tuition Group II	Semestral stipend
A	Greater than P1,000,000	P1,500	P1,000	N.A.
B	P500,001 – P1,000,000	P1,000	P600	N.A.
C	P135,001 – P500,000	P600	P400	N.A.
D	P80,001 – P135,000	P300	P200	N.A.
E	P80,000 or less	0	0	P12,000

SOURCE: ATANACIO REPORT

Estimating the income function

BECAUSE INCOME IS ONLY one indicator of socioeconomic status, or wealth, it is often used together with other indicators in financial means—testing to signal a family's (or individual's) capacity to pay, or eligibility to receive a subsidy. These indicators often include individual or family characteristics closely related to current income, (such as educational attainment, employment status, occupation) and various assets owned (real estate, private vehicles, household appliances) that may serve to substantiate information given about income, or possibly even hint at unreported income.

For the purpose of determining the appropriate bracket of STFAP applicants, an income function is estimated from nationally representative data, National Statistics Office's Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) and Labor Force Survey (LFS). Conducted every three years, the FIES collects detailed information on the income and expenditure patterns of households. The most recent data available is as of 2003. The LFS is a quarterly survey that collects information on the characteristics, and most particularly, the labor market status, of each household member included in the national sample. Since there is a good degree of overlap in the households covered by both surveys, it is possible to match the households in both surveys according to specific variables of interest.

The income function to be estimated is specified as follows:

Yj = ßiXij + .iAij + ej, where for the jth family, Y is current income, X is a vector of family characteristics, A is a vector of assets owned, ßi and .i are parameters to be estimated, and e is an error term.

Table A1 lists the variables to be included in the model estimation and their source. They include both numeric and categorical variables. Expenditure on electricity, floor area of house, the quantity of household appliances and motor vehicles owned and region of residence are from the FIES. Household characteristic variables are obtained mainly from the LFS and include the number of household members in specific occupational categories, number of household members by educational level completed, number of household helpers employed, and number of OFWs in the household. The model is estimated by ordinary least squares; the results are reported in Table A2.

The results of the estimation shown in Table A2 can then be used to predict the incomes of families of STFAP applicants. To be able to do this, however, it is necessary that the variables from the applicants' sample be constructed in the same way as those from the FIES and LFS.

Unfortunately, while the STFAP application form asks questions about the occupation of parents and/or spouse, or guardian, siblings, and other household members, these are not currently inputted as part of the database. Instead, only an indicator of whether the parents are employed and the number of siblings that are employed are inputted. Another observation is that the education variable—which has been shown in various studies to have a strong effect on earnings—also lacks the richness it could otherwise have. The current STFAP questionnaire asks about the specific level of education and even the degree completed by every household member, but the database has information only on whether the parents, spouse, guardian and nonworking siblings finished elementary, high school, or college, but not the actual level completed. The information on educational attainment is not even available for employed siblings. This prevented the better utilization of the national level data for estimating the income function.

SOURCE: REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW STFAP. THE GROUP WAS COMPOSED OF PROFESSORS EDGARDO ATANACIO, EMMANUEL ESGUERRA AND RENE FELIX.

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Planned coal plant in Subic opposed

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A GROUP OF BUSInessmen in the Subic Bay Freeport has opposed the construction of a 300-megawatt coal-fired power plant on the freeport's Redondo Peninsula and vowed not to trade off the environment with cheaper cost of electricity from a dirty source.

In a position paper submitted to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority on Friday, the Subic Bay Freeport Chamber of Commerce (SBFCC) said the plant's operation would cause irreversible damage to the area it described as having "extremely high biodiversity values and high species endemism."

This, the group said, would lead to the reduced commercial potential of the Freeport.

The Subic Bay Resorts Association in Subic, Zambales, also joined the protest to protect the town's beach, the area's prime attraction.

John Corcoran, SBFCC president, told SBMA officials in the petition's cover letter that the coal plant would be the "final step in the degradation of Subic Bay, reducing the potential to attract tourists."

Dangers

"It will pollute the air, the land and the water, removing the key ingredients in Subic Bay's prime assets—clean air, clean water and the proximity to nature," Corcoran said.

SBMA Chair Feliciano Salonga said the P100-million project was a joint venture of the SBMA and the Taiwanese-led Co-Generation. It would initially provide power to the Korean shipbuilder Hanjin and eventually to the entire freeport, he said.

"It would make business more competitive. The high cost of power is one of the problems of industrial locators," said Salonga in a telephone interview.

Subic Enerzone, the current electricity provider, charges P5 per kilowatt-hour, he said.

Salonga, however, calmed fears of environmental degradation, saying the project would "comply with all rules."

Clean emissions?

Corcoran said the "only official beneficiaries would be Hanjin and a handful of Taiwanese investors in the Subic Industrial Park."

As the proponent assured in its memorandum of understanding that "all emissions will meet the regulations," the SBFCC reminded SBMA that a pollution study in 1997 showed that Subic Bay, a protected area, has fresh and clean water.

The chamber also expressed skepticism on the capability of local authorities to regulate the project.

The SBFCC recommended the use of gas-fired combined cycle technology that it said has nearly 90 percent thermal efficiency or more than half of what a coal plant could produce.

Opposition to coal power plants had been tested in Pangasinan where villagers succeeded in blocking a plan to build a coal plant in one of the village there.

The monitoring of environmental pollution in Subic has been tight following an oil slick that smudged coastlines of Olongapo City recently.

In a recent slick, plastic bags containing oil debris apparently from the Petron oil spill in Guimaras were found floating in the city's coastline.

The garbage bags, containing what may be used bunker oil, appeared to have been deliberately dumped and were ruptured by waves, according to Olongapo officials. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

400 more new homes to rise for landslide victims

By Ven S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN Leyte—At least 423 more housing units intended for families, displaced by the mudslide early this year at Barangay Guinsaugon in this town, will rise at a resettlement site here next year.

Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lerias said that next year, the Japanese government would build 400 more housing units while the Korean Churches Relief Team will construct 23 other houses.

Some of these houses would be constructed at the upper portion of the seven-hectare "New Guinsaugon" in Barangay Magbagacay of this town, Lerias said. The survivors of the tragedy would like to retain the name Guinsaugon for their new village.

These proposed housing units were for relocated residents of Barangays Ayahag, Sug-angan and Nueva Esperanza, the villages near Barangay Guinsaugon that authorities found to be also landslide-prone and risky places.

Evacuees

Aside from the Guinsaugon survivors, nearly 7,000 people from St. Bernard and other parts of the province were evacuated from their homes, which where identified as among landslide risk areas.

These villagers are currently residing in temporary houses at the compound of the St. Bernard central elementary school. They formed themselves into a group known as Federation of St. Bernard Landless Land Owners Associations.

In New Guinsaugon, new duplex houses were constructed for 330 survivors or surviving family members of those who died in the tragedy 10 months ago.

They were formerly housed at the Christo Rey Regional High School here.

The Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Gawad Kalinga, the Philippine National Red Cross and the Japanese Government built these duplex houses.

"It's an ongoing, continuing effort to relocate, to build schools, to have day care centers and to build new communities, build new lives," Lerias said.

Building lives

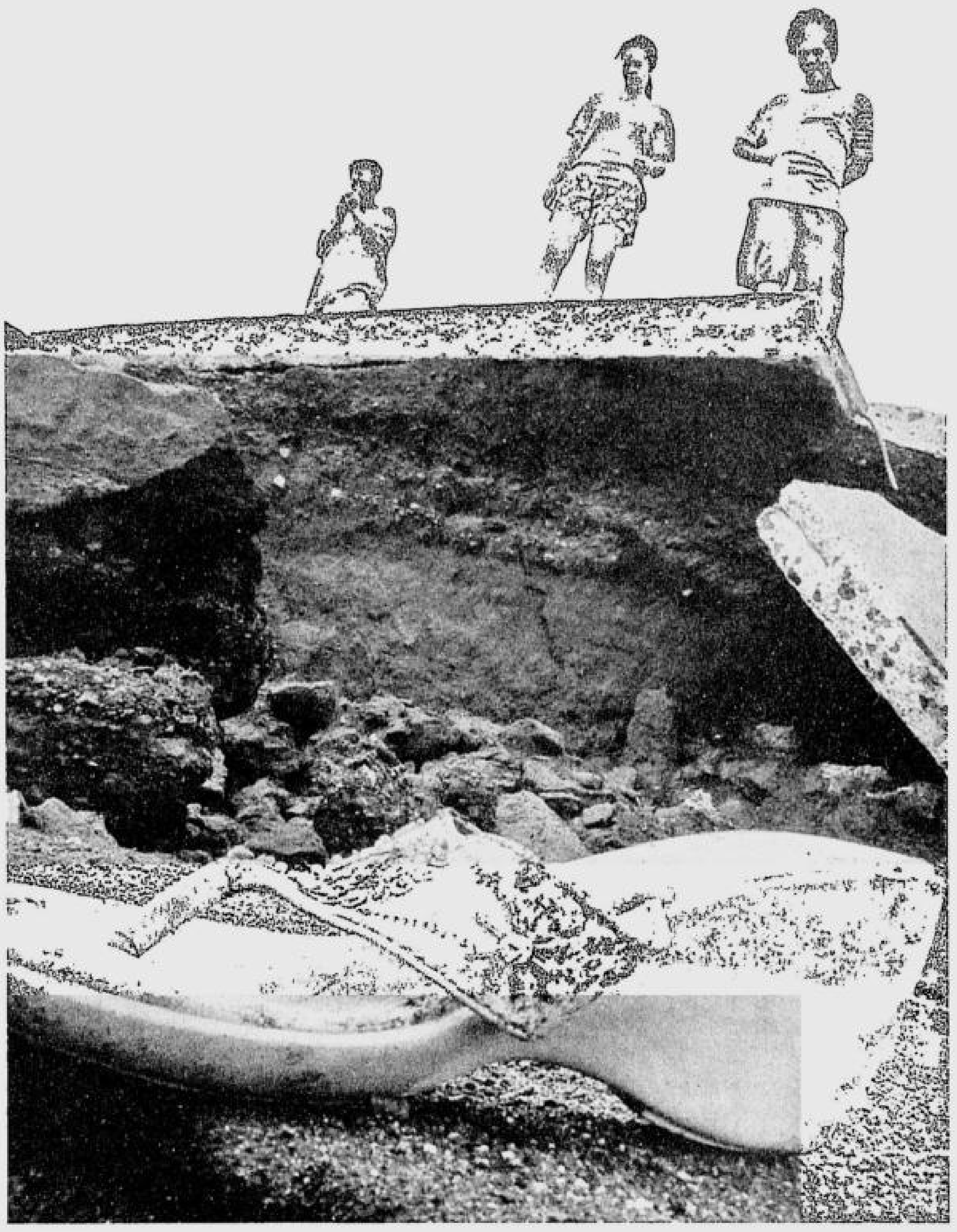
Lerias said that in relocating people they also have to be helped in building their lives.

She disclosed that the displaced people would be provided with entrepreneurship training and livelihood projects such as masonry, fish drying, food preparation, vegetable farming and aquaculture.

"We really have to help them with their coping mechanism, and we also have to help them with the means to cope," she added.

For instance, the Philippine Business for Social Progress would be implementing a livelihood project on mariculture, in which a displaced family-beneficiary would be provided with fish cages, Lerias said.

On Feb. 17, 2006, a part of Mt. Kan-abag collapsed and covered the entire village of Guinsaugon with mud and boulders.



FLIGHT

A WOMAN'S slipper lies beneath blocks of concrete that were torn out of what used to be a road in the village of Bogtong in Legazpi City, one of the areas worst hit by mudslides and floods at the height of Supertyphoon Reming in Albay.

JOANNA LOS BAÑOS/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Baguio faces suit for causing power outages in villages

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS HERE said the city government's decision to take over the operations of local power plants has triggered a massive blackout around the Benguet communities hosting these facilities.

Acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. said the city government should now expect suits from Barangays Nangalisan and Tadiangan in Tuba town because these villages lost power when the city took over the Asin hydro plants there.

The plants were built in the 1920s, but the government leased its operations to the Baguio Water District instead in 1981. BWD subleased the facility to the Aboitiz-owned Hydroelectric Development Corp. (Hedcor).

BWD's lease ended Sept. 1 but the city government allowed Hedcor to operate the facilities temporarily while it decides the plants' fate.

Bautista said he was hesitant when the city council ordered the city government to run the plants Dec. 26 because the city has no financial and technical capacity to operate power plants.

The council, however, favored a takeover in order to end controversies regarding the plants' operations.

BWD had objected to Hedcor's interim contract with the city, saying it violated bidding rules.

Acting Vice Mayor Leandro Yangot said the city has enough experts to tap once it operates the plants.

But the mayor said the blackouts appeared to have proven him right.

He said the blackouts were caused by miscommunication because the city government was assured that power distributor Benguet Electric Cooperative (Beneco) would immediately energize the host villages once Hedcor switches off the Asin plants.

Power was never restored, however, because Beneco's operations were not synchronized to time with the shut off, Bautista said.

He said they are also plagued by a legal issue surrounding the plants' ownership.

Residents near the plants have asked new terms because the facilities operate inside their ancestral domain.

Bautista said several residents have obstructed the plants' operations. He wrote the residents on Friday to start a dialogue because the villages may end up celebrating New Year in the dark "unless we talk."

In Zambales, the Zambales Electric Cooperative I (Zameco I) Dec. 27 cut off power supply to government offices in the capital town of Iba due to the town's P2.6 million unpaid power bills.

Hit by power disruption were the police and fire stations, public market and slaughterhouse, among others. Power was not cut off in the town's rural health office.

"We have no recourse but to enforce stiff action on the town due to the officials' failure to heed our numerous collection demands and continued refusal to settle the issue," said Rene Divino, Zameco I general manager.

Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon, with a report from Cesar Villa, Inquirer Central Luzon

Benguet veggie trade posts growth in sales

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE province's vegetable industry will see 2006 end with more sunshine as vegetable sales climbed to a record high at the trading post here.

Dominador Dongla, chief inspector at the vegetable trading post here, said the arrival of farmers' and traders' trucks from Metro Manila, Bicol and other provinces was the industry's gauge of profit.

Traffic here was snail-paced days before Christmas and New Year as trucks clogged the street leading to the trading post, police said.

But this time, Dongla said, farmers went home with more money as vegetable prices soared when traders competed over an oversupply of vegetables that the farmers timed to be harvested for the holidays.

He said the average delivery at the trading post of 1.5 million kilograms of vegetables daily more than doubled as highland vegetables were packed and transported at steady and stable prices.

From Dec. 19 to 23 and Dec. 26 to 30, the prices of potatoes, cabbage, carrots and *sayote*, the province's major crops in terms of production area, were sold high, pulling the prices of other commonly traded vegetables.

The prices per kilogram were as follows: potatoes, P25-P30; carrots P7, unwashed, and P15, washed; *sayote*, P6-P8; cabbage, P10; cucumber, P50-P70; bell pepper, P100-P180; lettuce, P20-P40; celery, P25-P30; broccoli, P50; and onion leeks, P25-P30.

"For the same period, an average of 200 farmers' trucks a day queued for a space at the 9,168 square meter trading post here," Dongla said.

The Benguet Traders and Truckers Association (BTTA) also experienced an unusual peak in the arrival of trucks that hauled vegetables to major markets in Luzon.

Agusta Balanoy, BTTA liaison officer, said the group recorded 572 truck trips from Dec. 19 to 23 and another 643 trips from Dec. 26 to 30, or a total of 1,215 trips for the whole period.

Balanoy said the trips were classified according to destination—Divisoria (368), Urdaneta City (196) and "province" (651).

She said the provincial deliveries reached Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Pampanga, Cagayan, Bicol, parts of Southern Luzon, Iloilo and Mindanao.

Traffic was at its worst Dec. 28 when President Macapagal-Arroyo visited the Benguet State University here to send off around 20 vegetable trucks bound for a new vegetable market along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

The police said around 600 trucks clogged the town that day and caused a three-km jam from the trading post to Barangay Tomay. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

THE BENGUET vegetable industry helps raise this child who plays near piles of *sayote at the La Trinidad Trading Post.*

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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Pleasant surprises of uncharted course

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao
Photos by Jerome C. Dumlao, Sarangani, Davao del Sur

IF YOU'VE STAYED ON THE POUNDED, BEATEN and abused tourist track long enough, then perhaps it's time to get off and venture into uncharted territory.

And if you want to go the extreme and veer way off your comfort zone, then try going to Sarangani, Davao Del Sur, the country's southernmost town just a few hours away from the northern tip of Indonesia.

If you look at the map, it's the two little dots at the bottom of the big island of Mindanao. The bigger one is Balut Island, and the other is Sarangani—the two main islands of the municipality.

Be warned that the trip to Sarangani town is not for the beginner, as even hardy travelers will find the trip quite a challenge.

First, you have to take the one hour, 40-minute flight to General Santos City, board a jeepney or hire a cab for the 45-minute ride to the port of Glan, Sarangani province, and then, take a close to three-hour speedboat ride to Balut Island.

I must admit, albeit reluctantly, that there were times during the seemingly endless trip across the rough Sarangani Bay that I almost called out to the boatmen and demand to be immediately taken back to the mainland.

But there were just enough rewards along the way to encourage you to keep the faith despite the crashing of the waves against the boat, the relentless slapping of the seawater against your face and arms, and the sun's searing heat.

There is the sight of schools of flying fish seemingly trying to outrace the boat, the changing color of the sea as the boat traveled across sandbars and coral reefs, and, of course, the lure of adventure.

Balut Island

Finally, just when my husband and I thought we can no longer take another splash of water in the face, Balut Island comes into view.

It was like a scene straight out of Steven Spielberg's Jurassic Park, with the lush vegetation, the mist covering the apex of the dormant volcano that is Balut, and the glaring lack of people. The only thing missing were the dinosaurs.

When I staggered out of the outrigger boat with legs that suddenly turned to jelly, I hit large, rounded, multi-colored pebbles instead of the usual white sand, evidence of the island's volcanic origin.

Another proof was the spring found further up the beach, with water hot enough to boil an egg or the skin of a human silly enough to dive in.

We stayed long enough to get our circulation back and to sample a coconut-based drink brought over by locals kind enough to share their *merienda* with some of the very few tourists who venture to their land.

Their language was alien to me and it was later pointed out to me that they were speaking B'laan, the dialect of the B'laan who account for the majority of Sarangani's people.

As soon as we recovered our sea legs, we got on our trusty outrigger again and sailed for another 30 minutes to Sarangani Island, and landed on Olaniban Island.

Pleasure sight

It was then that we forgot all about the difficult trip because Olaniban Island looked like Boracay before all the tourists and the hotels came rushing in.

We had the beach with its sugary white sand almost to ourselves with just a few tenants and birds to keep us company.

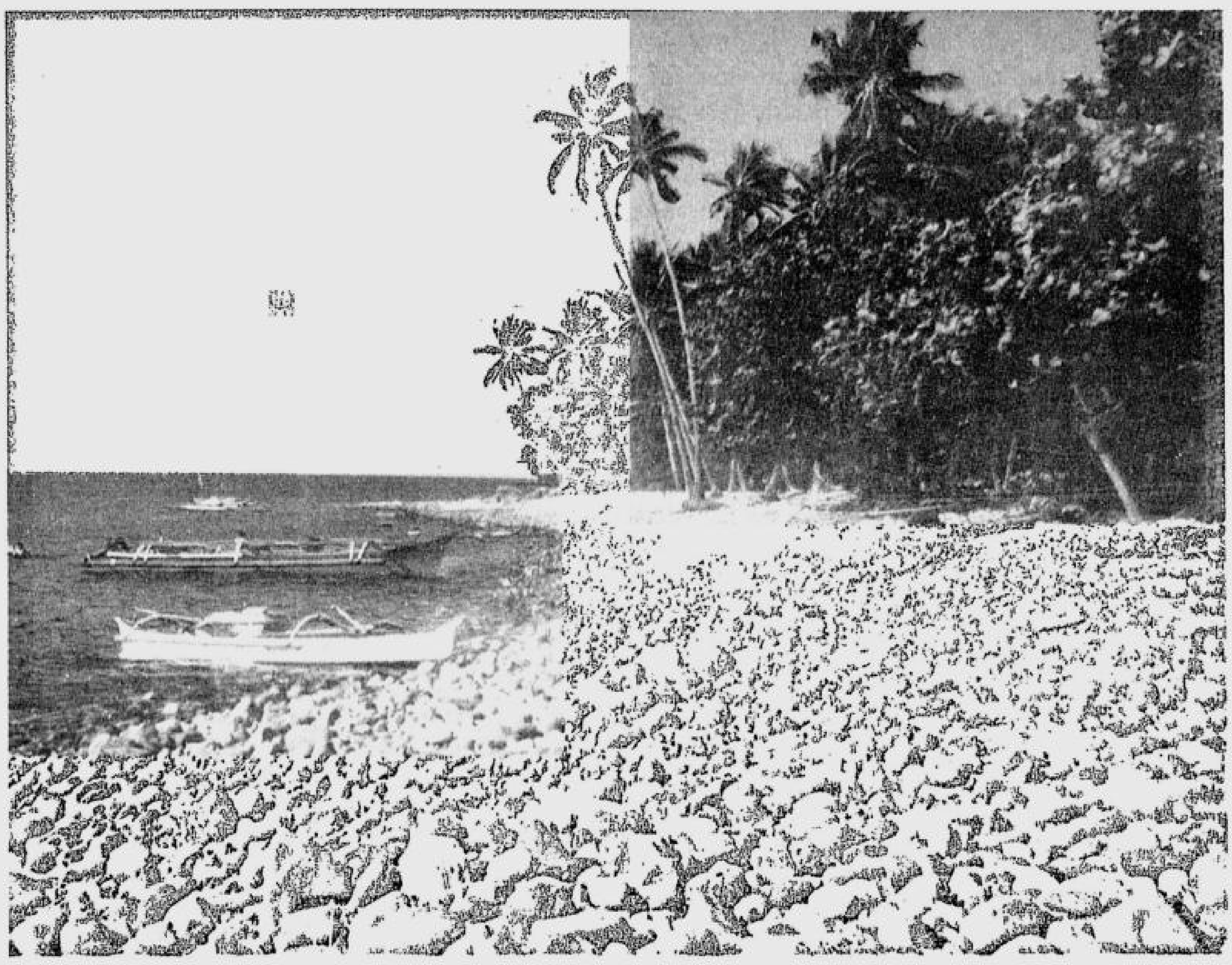
We only had coconut trees and a makeshift hut for shelter, but they were more than enough to keep alive the fantasy that we were the lords of our own little island, far from the crowds and the annoying sound of a cellular phone going off.

The blessed sound of silence is only broken by the trilling of colorful birds and the breaking of the waves.

The locals say the island was leased by a businessman and he intends to develop it into a resort to attract tourists.

Today, the island is only enjoyed by Sarangani people and a few visitors from the neighboring towns.

We only had less than an hour to enjoy the solitude and pay homage to God's creation and it was off to Balut Island again to prepare for much-needed shuteye, but not before our boatman bought what looked like a three-kilo fish, fresh off the sea, for a handsome sum of P70.



BALUT ISLAND is being developed into a tourist attraction.

PHOTOS BY JEROME DUMLAO/CONTRIBUTOR

History unfolds

On the way back, we stopped by Marorong islet to see what's left of the stone fortress put up by Lopez de Villalobos, who, in 1543, was tasked by Spain with retracing Magellan's route aside from bringing home the bounties of the fabled spices of the Moluccas.

Just a small part of one wall is left for visitors to see, but it's enough to conjure the image of the Spanish explorer having stayed there on his way to the Moluccas.

These days, only intrepid, modern-day explorers bear witness to the lonely fort with the ringside view of Balut and Saranggani Islands' waters.

Darkness has descended on the island by the time we made our way back to port.

We gingerly made our way up the giant slabs of volcanic rock to the dock and then took a short five-minute motorcycle ride to the municipal hall, which was to be our home for the night.

Sarangani Mayor Jerry Cawa, who generously turned his office into our quarters for the night, said plans are underway to put up lodging facilities in the island to encourage more tourists to visit.

Fine dining

In the meantime, we had the municipal hall to ourselves with fresh fish for dinner and Mayor Cawa for company.

It was from the mayor that we learned that Sarangani people are a happy mix of B'laans, Christians, Muslims and Indonesians.

It's really not surprising considering that Sarangani is just a few hours by boat away from the northern tip of Indonesia, and Indonesians have been coming to Sarangani since the middle of the 14th century when a certain Datu Panurat took off on his *balangay* from Indonesia and landed on Batuganding point, Balut island.

Since then, Indonesians have been in and out of Sarangani and their legacy is seen in the coconut trees that abound the island as Indonesians were said to have been the first to bring coconut trees to the island; the names of some of the barangays; and finally, the people.

Cawa estimated that there were more than 1,000 pure Indonesians living in Sarangani. But they consider themselves more Filipino than Indonesian considering that they were born and raised here.

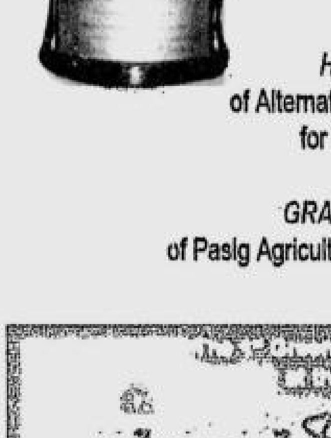
It is pleasant surprises like these that make the trip far from ordinary. There were more, the locals assured us, but it was time to head for home.

And as we rode our boat for the long, daunting trip back to Glan, we no longer complained about the cold and the spray from the boat hitting the rough sea at high speed.

We were strengthened by the knowledge that we dared go where very few have gone before.

> 'But there were just enough rewards along the way to encourage you to keep the faith despite the crashing of the waves against the boat, the relentless slapping of the seawater against your face…'

FISHERMAN displays his catch off Balut Island.



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Saddam Hussein hanged

From page A1

But Human Rights Watch criticized the execution, calling Saddam's trial "deeply flawed."

"Saddam Hussein was responsible for massive human rights violations, but that can't justify giving him the death penalty, which is a cruel and inhuman punishment," said Richard Dicker, director of Human Rights Watch's International Justice Program.

Relatively quiet

Baghdad was relatively quiet after the announcement, and the government did not impose a round-the-clock curfew as it did when Saddam was convicted on Nov. 5 to thwart any surge in retaliatory violence.

In Baghdad's Shiite enclave of Sadr City, some people danced and fired guns in the air to celebrate the former dictator's death. Saddam was a Sunni Muslim.

The hanging of Saddam, who was ruthless in ordering executions of his opponents, will keep other Iraqis from pursuing justice against the ousted leader.

At his death, he was in the midst of a second trial, charged with genocide and other crimes for a 1987-88 military crackdown that killed an estimated 180,000 Kurds in northern Iraq. Experts said the trial of his codefendants was likely to continue despite his execution.

Largest holiday

The execution was carried out around the start of Eid al-Adha, the Islamic world's largest holiday, which marks the end of the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, the haj. Many Muslims celebrate by sacrificing domestic animals, usually sheep.

Sunnis and Shiites throughout the world began observing the four-day holiday at dawn yesterday, but Iraq's Shiite community—the country's majority—was due to start celebrating today.

"We wanted him to be executed on a special day," al-Rubaie said.

The feast marks the sacrifice the prophet Abraham was prepared to make when God ordered him to kill his son and many Shiites could regard Saddam's death as a gift from God. Such symbolism could further anger Sunnis, resentful of new Shi'ite power.

The execution came 56 days after a court convicted Saddam and sentenced him to death for his role in the killings of 148 Shiite Muslims from the town of Dujail where assassins tried to kill the dictator in 1982.

Appeal rejected

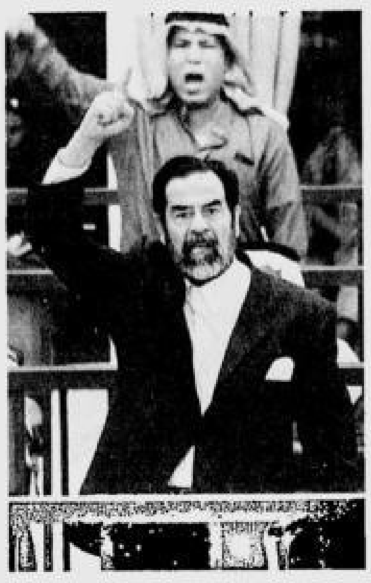
Iraq's highest court rejected Saddam's appeal Monday and ordered him executed within 30 days.

A US judge on Friday refused to stop Saddam's execution, rejecting a last-minute court challenge.

Al-Maliki had rejected calls that Saddam be spared, telling families of people killed during the dictator's rule that would be an insult to the victims.

"Our respect for human rights requires us to execute him, and there will be no review or delay in carrying out the sentence," al-Maliki's office quoted him as saying during a meeting with relatives before the hanging.

Many people in Iraq's Shiite majority were eager to see the execution of a man whose Sunni Arab-dominated regime oppressed them and the Kurds.



ON TRIAL: Saddam and his half brother Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti (back) berate the court in the course of their trial in Baghdad, which began on Oct. 5, 2005. He was in the midst of a second trial charged with genocide and other crimes for a 1987-88 crackdown that killed about 100,000 Kurds in northern Iraq.

'God's gift to Iraqis'

Before the hanging, a mosque preacher in the Shiite holy city of Najaf on Friday called Saddam's execution "God's gift to Iraqis."

"Oh, God, you know what Saddam has done! He killed millions of Iraqis in prisons, in wars with neighboring countries and he is responsible for mass graves. Oh God, we ask you to take revenge on Saddam," said Sheik Sadraldin al-Qubanji, a member of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

On Thursday, two half brothers visited Saddam in his cell, a member of the former dictator's defense team, Badee Izzat Aref, told The Associated Press by telephone from the United Arab Emirates. He said the former dictator handed them his personal belongings.

Will, farewell message

A senior official at the Iraqi defense ministry said Saddam gave his will to one of his half brothers. The official spoke on condition of anonymity, because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

In a farewell message to Iraqis posted Wednesday on the Internet, Saddam said he was giving his life for his country as part of the struggle against the United States. "Here, I offer my soul to God as a sacrifice, and if he wants, he will send it to heaven with the martyrs," he said.

One of Saddam's lawyers, Issam Ghazzawi, said the letter was written by Saddam on Nov. 5, the day he was convicted by an Iraqi tribunal in the Dujail killings.

Support for insurgency

The message called on Iraqis to put aside the sectarian hatred that has bloodied their nation for a year and voiced support for the Sunni Arab-dominated insurgency against US-led forces, saying: "Long live jihad and the mujahedeen."

Saddam urged Iraqis to rely on God's help in fighting "against the unjust nations" that ousted his regime.

Najeeb al-Nauimi, a member of Saddam's legal team, said US authorities maintained physical custody of Saddam until the execution to prevent him from being humiliated publicly or his corpse being mutilated, as has happened to previous Iraqi leaders deposed by force.

End of era

He said they didn't want anything to happen to further inflame Sunni Arabs.

"This is the end of an era in Iraq," al-Nauimi said from Doha, Qatar. "The Baath regime ruled for 35 years. Saddam was vice president or president of Iraq during those years. For Iraqis, he will be very well remembered. Like a martyr, he died for the sake of his country."

Iraq's death penalty was suspended by the US military after it toppled Saddam in 2003, but the new Iraqi government reinstated it two years later, saying executions would deter criminals.

Saddam's own regime used executions and extrajudicial killings as a tool of political repression, both to eliminate real or suspected political opponents and to maintain a reign of terror.

Killed sons-in-law

In the months after he seized power on July 16, 1979, he had hundreds of members of his own party and army officers slain. In 1996, he ordered the slaying of two sons-in-law who had defected to Jordan but returned to Baghdad after receiving guarantees of safety.

Saddam built Iraq into one of the Arab world's most modern societies, but then plunged the country into an eight-year war with neighboring Iran that killed hundreds of thousands of people on both sides and wrecked Iraq's economy.

During that war, as part of the wider campaign against Kurds, the Iraqi military used chemical weapons against the Kurdish town of Halabja in northern Iraq, killing an estimated 5,000 civilians.

Invaded Kuwait

The economic troubles from the Iran war led Saddam to invade Kuwait in the summer of 1990, seeking to grab its oil wealth, but a US-led coalition inflicted a stinging defeat on the Iraq army and freed the Kuwaitis.

UN sanctions imposed over the Kuwait invasion remained in place when Saddam failed to cooperate fully in international efforts to ensure that his programs for creating weapons of mass destruction had been dismantled. Iraqis, once among the region's most prosperous, were impoverished.

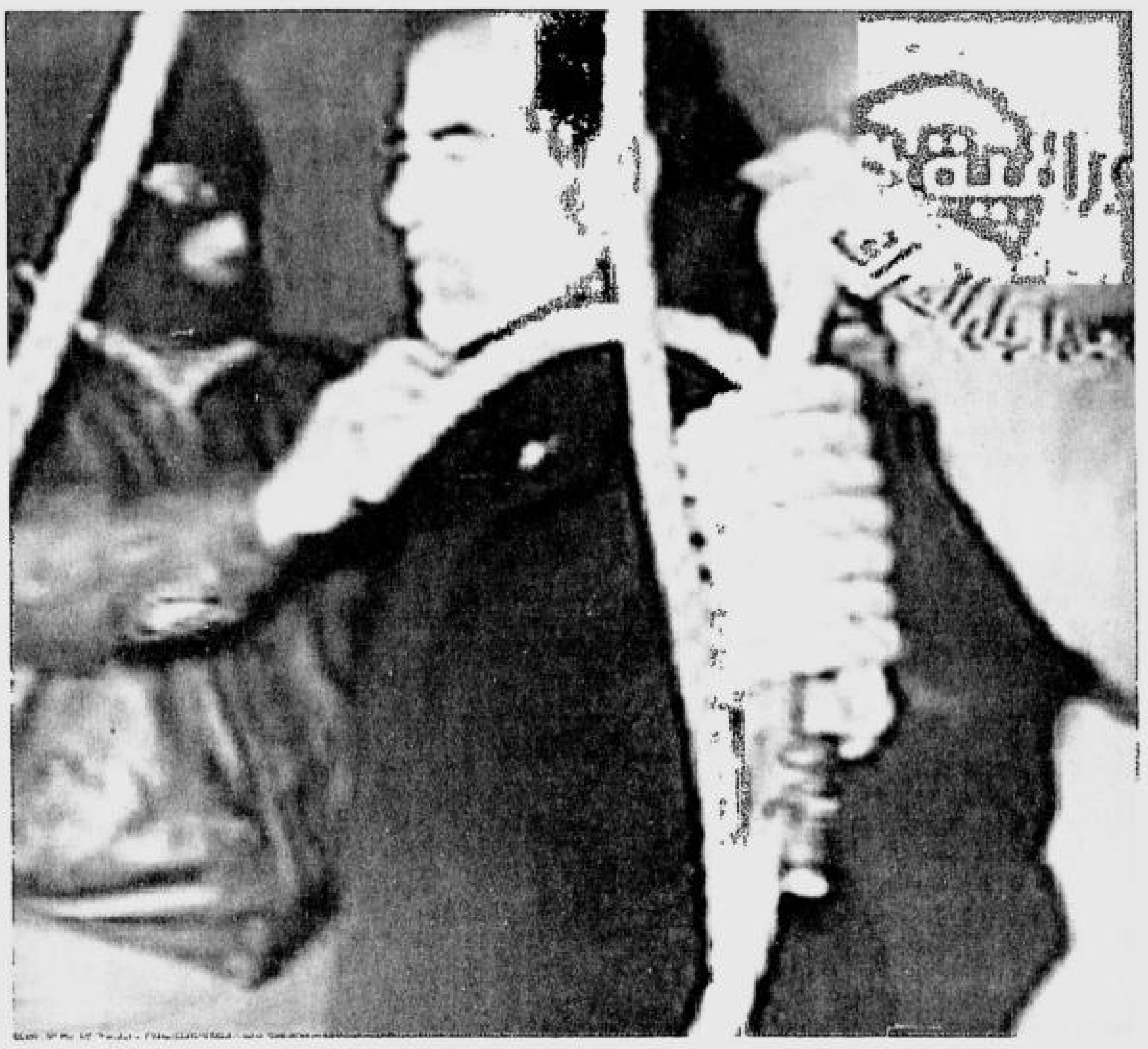
The final blow came when US-led troops invaded in March 2003. Saddam's regime fell quickly, but political, sectarian and criminal violence have created chaos that has undermined efforts to rebuild Iraq's ruined economy.

Personality cult

While he wielded a heavy hand to maintain control, Saddam also sought to win public support with a personality cult that pervaded Iraqi society.

Thousands of portraits, posters, statues and murals were erected in his honor all over Iraq. His face could be seen on the sides of office buildings, schools, airports and shops and on Iraq's currency.

Despite his ouster, Washington, its allies and the new Iraqi leaders remain mired in a fight to quell a stubborn insurgency by Saddam loyalists and a vicious sectarian conflict. *AP, Reuters*



IT WAS ALL OVER for Saddam Hussein in moments at the dawning of a new day in Baghdad which he dominated for 25 years. When he arrived at the execution room, photographs and video footage were taken, recounts Iraqi's national security adviser.

TV GRAB/ AL-IRAQIYA TV

CAPTURED by US troops from inside a hole in the ground, this unsourced photo reportedly shows Saddam being dragged out of his hideout on Dec. 13, 2003.

AFP

Fate of dictators . . .

From page A1

Kim Jong-il.

DIED IN EXILE:

- IDI AMIN. Uganda's dictator from 1971 to 1979 died on Aug. 16, 2003, in Saudi Arabia, where he lived in exile without facing justice for his crimes.
- MOBUTU SESE SEKO. The former president of Zaire died of cancer on Sept. 7, 1997, just months after going into exile in Rabat, Morocco.
- ALFREDO STROESSNER. Paraguay's military dictator from 1954 until his ouster in a 1989 coup died at the age of 93 on Aug. 16, 2006, in Brasilia.
- POL POT. The genocidal Khmer Rouge regime chief from 1975 to 1979 died of old age on April 16, 1998, in the Cambodian jungle, an exile in his own country.
- FERDINAND MARCOS. Ousted in February 1986 after a 20-year rule, the Philippine dictator went into exile in Hawaii where he died on Sept. 28, 1989, at the age of 72.

EXECUTED:

- BENITO MUSSOLINI. "Il Duce" from 1922 to 1943, he was shot by Italian partisans on April 28, 1945, while fleeing for Switzerland with his mistress.
- NICOLAE CEAUSESCU. Romanian leader for 24 years, he was executed with his wife Elena on Dec. 25, 1989, after a summary trial days after his overthrow.
- SADDAM HUSSEIN. Iraq's former leader, deposed by a 2003 US-led military invasion, hanged on Dec. 30 for killing 148 Shiite villagers.

FACING JUSTICE:

- AUGUSTO PINOCHET. Chile's former dictator died on Dec. 10, 2006, of a heart attack at the age of 91, still to face justice after his 17-year rule.
- SLOBODAN MILOSEVIC. The ex-Yugoslav president died in The Hague on March 11, 2006, while on trial for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.
- MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM. On Jan. 11, 2007, Ethiopia will pass verdict in absentia on the former dictator living in exile in Zimbabwe since 1991.
- CHARLES TAYLOR. Liberia's former president, charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, is due to go on trial at The Hague in 2007.
- JORGE RAFAEL VIDELA. Argentina lifted the former dictator's immunity in September after his 1990 amnesty from a life sentence for kidnap and torture.
- MANUEL NORIEGA. The former Panamanian leader is serving 40 years in Florida for drug trafficking after the United States invaded Panama in 1989. *AFP*

Revelry hurts animals most

From page A1

"The ears of our pets are much more sensitive than ours. During New Year's Eve, transfer your pets to a room that is reasonably isolated from the noise. You can play some music to drown out the sound of firecrackers," said animal welfare advocate Oscar Lei.

Dr. Marga Carpio of the Vets in Practice in Mandaluyong, said Christmas and New Year's celebrations were indeed very stressful for animals. All animals can be stressed, especially those that are small and inherently high strung, she said.

Heart attacks

Animal experts have noted that many animals feel pain from loud sounds that are otherwise tolerable for humans. The harmless bang of a five-star or "bawang" firecracker for humans is equivalent to an explosion of a small bomb or hand grenade to dogs.

Radio reports last year said that some dogs with heart problems suffered heart attacks after being exposed to exploding firecrackers.

Carpio said the stress of exploding firecrackers could indeed cause a heart attack in a dog with a heart condition.

According to Jason Baker, Asia-Pacific director of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, fireworks generate a noise level of up to 190 decibels, which is higher than the noise from gunshots (140 decibels) and low-level flying jets (100 decibels).

For humans, irreversible ear damage, such as tinnitus and loss of hearing, starts at the 80-decibel range.

"Dogs, cats, lizards, fish and other animals who share our homes don't understand that the terrifying loud bangs are a [sign of] celebration," he said.

"One can only imagine what they think, given how much more sensitive their hearing is than ours," he said.

Animal shelters often report that after fireworks displays they are swamped with calls about lost dogs and cats, Baker said. He said dogs were brought to shelters with paws bloody from running or torn skin from tearing through a backyard wooden fence or, worse, crippled from being hit by a car.

Keeping them safe

To help keep pet and other animals safe during the festivities, Peta recommends taking the following precautions:

- Keep cats, dogs and other companion animals safely indoors during the fireworks display, and if possible, stay with them.

Do not leave animals tethered or chained. They could end up getting hanged if they leap over a fence while trying to escape.

- Close windows and curtains, and turn on a radio or TV to help drown out the noise.
- Make sure your companion animal is wearing a collar and an up-to-date identification tag, just in case. Many lost animals taken to shelters have to be destroyed because shelter workers are unable to track down their guardians.
- Choose not to discharge fireworks on your own property or anywhere near wild or domestic animals. If you go to someone else's home to celebrate, make sure their animals are safely inside and away from all pyrotechnics.

Sedation

Animal lover Tin-Tin Ang, who has adopted a stray cat and 10 dogs—one of which she saved from a vehicular accident and one from a dog trader—has had her dog Border sedated and moved into the house. Border's doghouse was close to the street where neighbors would be lighting firecrackers during the revelry.

As early as Christmas Eve, animal lover Rommel Lalata already sheltered his two dogs inside his house.

In the Pinoy Animal lover e-group, a member has suggested giving pets herbal relaxants on New Year's Eve.

The Compassion and Responsibility for Animals (Cara), an animal rescue group that currently houses 31 dogs and over 50 cats, is protecting its wards with herbal relaxants, according to Cara caretaker Alex Fermin.

According to Carpio, stocks of the herbal relaxant capsule ran out as early as Christmas, although the powder and liquid forms are still available. Some of the brand names are Calm Dog, K-9 Medicine Chest, Calm Bird, and Dog Calm.

She said herbal relaxant medications are good for mild cases of stress and anxiety and should be given at least three days before the eve of New Year. Doing so later than that would require narcotics and tranquilizers which have to be administered by a veterinarian.

Aromatherapy

For mild cases of stress, Castro said she uses supplements and Lavender aromatherapy.

Supplements can cost anywhere from P500 to P1,000. Narcotics and tranquilizers depend on the weight of the animals. For average-sized dogs (10 to 12 kgs in the Philippines), sedation could range from P300 to P500.

For those who can't afford to buy the drugs, Carpio advises that pets be kept in enclosed areas with music or in air-conditioned rooms. Spray the room with lavender-scented air freshener. One can also burn lavender oil.

"In aromatherapy, anything that's lavender-based will be good," said Carpio.

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The gift of smile (and hope)

A 25-year-old medical mission provides more than surgery and dental care

A VOLUNTEER doctor manages to get a laugh out of his young patient.

VJ VILLAFRANCA/CONTRIBUTOR

By Ross Harper-Alonso
Contributor

FOUR-MONTH-OLD RAYMOND was crying and kicking on a bed in a ward of the Ospital ng Makati.

He was hungry and uncomfortable with an intravenous needle sticking out of his tiny hand. His young parents watched with mixed emotions as a volunteer nurse gently picked him up to take him to the operating room where a senior volunteer surgeon was preparing to repair the baby's cleft lip.

In a little less than two hours, Raymond's face and life had changed for the better.

This was what Operation Smile—the world's largest private, not-for-profit volunteer medical services organization—had set out to do on its first medical mission 25 years ago.

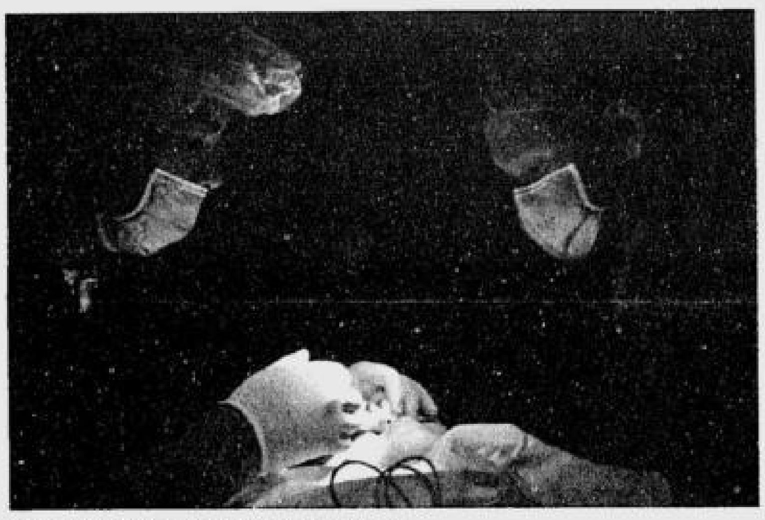
Free surgery

Operation Smile provides free reconstructive surgery and related health care to indigent children and young adults with cleft lips, palates and other serious facial deformities in the United States and developing countries.

A YOUNG girl seems to be reassuring her younger sibling who is set to undergo reconstructive surgery.

It was founded in 1982 by American plastic surgeon Dr. William P. Magee and his wife Kathy, a nurse and social worker, shortly after returning from medical missions in Naga City.

The couple was not part of the original team. The two replaced volunteers who could not make the trip.



DOCTORS concentrate on their task.

On this latest mission at the Makati hospital, the mood was calm and light despite the number of parents and children waiting anxiously.

Tense situation

"Please open your mouth," urged team leader Dr. Acer Acosta, tilting the face of Brian, a preteen with a cleft palate. Brian obeyed but shut his eyes tightly and clenched his fists.

"He stopped going to school because his classmates teased him for being *ngongo*," his mother explained. Dr. Acosta asked Brian with a grin, "If I fix the way you talk, will you promise to go back to school and get good grades?" Brian's eyes lit up as he nodded, sealing the deal.

The volunteer doctors, who come from the country's top hospitals, feel it is only right to help make a difference in a child's life.

Dr. Susan Gooco has been a volunteer for seven years. On a busy morning recently, inside the operating room, the anesthesiologist was calming the fears of a 3-year-old boy who had just woken up from general anesthesia, his cleft lip repaired.

"It's finished. Mommy and Daddy are waiting for you," she assured the frightened and dazed child.

Solemn oath

"When I became a doctor, the oath I made was not to harm my patients and do my best to make them better," Gooco told the INQUIRER.

"Volunteer or charity work isn't part of that oath. I do this because I want to help and to thank the Lord for the good life I have. The peace and indescribable sense of fulfillment is a gift Operation Smile and its many patients have given me," she added.

Older patients are administered only local anesthesia. They are not put to sleep completely.

A nurse ushered in 14-year-old Roselle who was covering her mouth with her hand to hide a cleft lip with a protruding tooth. Dr. Mark Sison saw that she was trembling as tears streamed down her face.

"Don't be scared, the operation won't hurt. If you feel any pain, just tell me and I'll put more anesthesia," he promised.

Humor for relaxation

Without looking at the doctor, Roselle agreed and lay down but she still would not relax. "How many boyfriends do you have?" Dr. Sison asked playfully. "None," was the quiet reply.

"How many husbands do you have then?" he joked. "After this surgery, you'll have a line of suitors waiting outside your house."

Roselle giggled and surgery began.

The volunteers are not all doctors. There are speech pathologists, dentists, retired nurses, parents and ordinary citizens who wear their Operation Smile pins with pride.

To them, a gentle touch and the many other inestimable acts of humanity they do for the missions were borne from inspiration and dedication. One does feel the nurturing spirit that comes from within each of them.

ANOTHER volunteer doctor explains the procedure for surgery to an anxious mother.

New Year's Eve a special day for Munti inmates

By Jocelyn R. Uy

BABES, A MURDER CONVICT detained at the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City, has everything planned for today's New Year's Eve revelry.

Inside the kitchen of the chapel located in the maximum security compound, a small refrigerator has been stocked with *media noche* staples like ham, queso de bola, ube and fruit salad for dessert.

Babes said he would be up early this morning to prepare the meals for the priests and other visitors who would be coming in later in the day—a chore he has always looked forward to every year.

In between his chores, he plans to attend Mass with his brother and sister and share a simple meal at the newly-built "International Park" located just a few meters from the compound's main entrance.

If he has enough time, Babes said he might ask his siblings to join him at the multipurpose hall next to the mini park, where a dance has been organized by inmates and their visitors.

When the clock strikes at midnight, he said he would find a comfortable spot in the compound where he could view the fireworks set off by people in a nearby neighborhood. At the same time, inmates would bang on pots and pans as if to ward off the bad energies in their cramped cells.

"Even if we are jailed, we also make plans for New Year's Eve and look forward to new days ahead," Babes said.

Good things may come in trickle in a desolate place like the jail, but prisoners at the NBP have learned to banish despair and draw hope from the little delights that can be found inside the prison.

Fr. Roberto Olaguer, head of the NBP chaplain, said the inmates, most of whom he has befriended, "always hope for the best because they have seen the worst. They search for meaning in everything."

Babes has been inside the max-

NEW YEAR'S EVE/ A18

Take pictures, please

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A POLICE OFFICIAL YESTERDAY called on the public to put their cell phones to good use by taking pictures of civilians firing their guns indiscriminately on New Year's Eve.

Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, director of the Southern Police District, said that the police have failed to go after errant gun owners for lack of evidence.

"If the public would be able to provide us with photos or videos of cases of indiscriminate firing, we are confident that the cases filed against these erring civilians will hold water in court," he said.

Rosales led police chiefs on Friday in taping shut the muzzles of guns owned by an estimated 2,700 policemen.

"Policemen should not feel ashamed about this. This will help prove that incidents of indiscriminate firing don't come from us," the police official said.

Officials of the Philippine National Police earlier warned policemen against firing their guns on New Year's Eve, saying that they face dismissal from the service as well as administrative charges.

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Fort Boni's strictly (street) dancing 'master'

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TALES OF THE CITY

IT IS A CRISP, CLEAR MORNING and a trail of cars starts to crawl on an intersection at Fort Bonifacio (Global City) in Taguig City, horns blaring a thumping beat.

The show is about to begin for 37-year-old Noel Quilatan.

In a blue hat, black boots and a yellow vest, Quilatan mans his post in time for the early morning rush hour. But rather than the usual hand signals, he executes slick dance steps right in the middle of McKinley Parkway and the Fifth Avenue—his regular stage.

Although his moves look choreographed, the "dancing traffic enforcer" said he does not rehearse his dance steps. "I just listen to my heart and the music in my mind and dance spontaneously while I direct traffic. I want to make the drivers smile," he told the INQUIRER.

Quilatan, a marine engineering graduate from Pagadian City, Zamboanga Del Sur, has been on the job for two years now, after seven years of trying his luck in several carpentry jobs, first in Laguna, then in Metro Manila.

He first set foot in Manila in 1996 when he took the board examinations, hoping that he would pass so that he could work abroad and send his children to school.

But his plans did not push through when he failed the licensure examination twice. He was compelled to take on a succession of construction jobs for several years to support his growing brood.

In 2003, he saw a "wanted" sign hanging on the door of the Bonifacio Security Services Inc. while combing the vastness of Fort Bonifacio looking for an extra job. There was a construction boom then, with high-rise condominiums and commercial buildings going up in the prime real estate land, recalled Quilatan.

"I decided to take a chance, even if the job was new to me. The employees at the Security Services broke out in laughter when I opened my bag to get my resume and they saw hammers, nails and a saw," he said.

Personal touch

After a few months of training with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and city traffic enforcement unit, Quilatan learned the ropes and even put on a personal touch to his new job.

Rain or shine, motorists plying the Fort Bonifacio intersection—with its magnificent steel skyscrapers looming in the background—would get a glimpse of Quilatan, swinging his arms and twisting his body in time to the music only he can hear.

As if to show that he was in tune with the times, Quilatan said he would play the music of Bamboo (a Filipino rock band) or Pussycat Dolls (an American all-girl band) songs in his mind to accompany his dance steps.

Motorists—most of them foreigners, residents from nearby posh condominiums and students attending international schools at the Fort—would give him food and little gifts, or honk their horn to show their appreciation at the sight of Quilatan.

DANCE master Noel Quilatan performs on his stage—the intersection of a street in Global City, Taguig.

PHOTOS BY EDWIN BACASMAS

"I JUST listen to my heart and the music in my mind and dance spontaneously while I direct traffic."

But his job is not as easy as it looks, he said. Sometimes, he would wake up mornings with sharp pains in his knees after standing for 12 hours, save for an hour of break from his work.

Nerve-wracking

It can also be nerve-wracking to witness horrible accidents, he said. One day, during his first few days on the job, a motorcycle hit a center island near the intersection, and its driver dropped to the pavement a few meters away. The mishap left him trembling, but he still rushed to help the victim, he recalled.

As a boy, helping out his father till the land back in his hometown came before attending to anything else. He often went to school smelling like a carabao, Quilatan added. During his college days, he always brought with him packets of sugar-coated peanuts he would sell to his classmates, for fare or lunch money.

Despite the temptations on the road, he said he finds it easy to refuse "donations" that would have made his life a wee bit more comfortable.

"Sometimes, motorists who have committed road violations would try to bribe me to avoid getting a ticket. But I turn them down in a respectful way. I refuse to do so because that's not how I was raised," he added.

Educating drivers

There are a few other things that fellow traffic enforcers could learn from him: "The traffic violation tickets that I hold don't mean power over erring drivers. To me, it's one way of educating them because sometimes they don't know why they were given a ticket," he said.

Quilatan added that it is always good to smile at passing motorists, even the mean-tempered ones.

But it was still best to dance for them, he said. According to him, it is good to be a source of joy in the otherwise chaotic world of traffic jams and road rage.

Thieves get watchmen drunk, then rob store

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THREE ROBBERS TREATED TWO caretakers to a drinking spree on Friday night before breaking into one of the stores they were guarding in Marikina City.

When Reynaldo Eugenio, 48, came back from a beerhouse at around the same time Moises Erestain, 49, woke up on Saturday morning, they found out that the pawnshop they were supposed to be watching had already lost pieces of jewelry.

Imaginative plan

Policemen said that this was the first time they heard of a robbery plan as imaginative as this one.

It was not known how much the robbers managed to cart away but Eugenio said the robbers managed to forcibly open several drawers filled with pieces of jewelry inside the pawnshop.

Investigation chief Insp. Jose Salazar told the INQUIRER that they were already verifying the identities of the suspects who had rented the store next to the pawnshop a few days earlier.

One of them told the owner of the row of stores that his name was Daniel Valdez.

The robbers rented the vacant store next to the RMR Sanglaan on Colt Street in Barangay Concepcion Dos last week, even making an initial payment of P30,000.

The robbers told the store owner they would be setting up a furniture shop.

The suspects showed up again at the store on Friday night, telling the caretakers they would just be cleaning the room they were renting.

Drinking bout

They also told the caretakers they had just received their holiday bonus and invited them to a drinking bout.

"We did not get suspicious because we knew they were renting the stall from our employer," Eugenio said in Filipino.

The robbers and the caretakers were soon exchanging stories over bottles of beer in a vacant lot near the pawnshop, where the caretakers usually stay.

Erestain was already falling asleep but the robbers apparently noticed Eugenio was not yet too drunk by then, police also theorized.

So minutes later, one of the suspects invited Eugenio and barker Herlito Villavicencio to continue their merrymaking in a beerhouse several kilometers away from the pawnshop, leaving Erestain, who was already drunk, in the company of the two other robbers.

The robber also left Eugenio and Villavicencio in the beerhouse, saying he would return after attending to some important matters.

The robber even gave Eugenio P1,000 for their bill but he never came back.

When Eugenio and Villavicencio returned to the pawnshop at about 12:30 a.m. yesterday, they found that the steel windows of the pawnshop had been destroyed.

New Year's Eve . . .

From page A17

imum compound for 13 years, but he has been trying to make every day an extraordinary one by doing simple things that he had taken for granted when he was still a free man.

Inside the jail, he sings in the church choir and cooks meals for priests, nuns and students who drop by the prison to do volunteer work.

For Ernesto Mateo, one of the soldiers convicted in the Aquino-Galman double murder case, he has found meaning in his service to the church and by being a member of the "PSG"— the Pastoral Social Group which is tasked to secure visitors from religious organizations and other VIPs.

"Of course, it's also because of my family that I have not lost hope after being incarcerated for 24 years now," he said.

Julius Medalla, 35, who was meted a life sentence for murder in 2002, enumerated three things that help prisoners look forward to the future with enthusiasm: The families and relatives who visit them regularly, the informal education inside the jail made available by the Bureau of Corrections and the support of the church and nongovernment agencies who do volunteer work.

"The educational training is most important to those inmates who have been abandoned by their families or whose relatives cannot visit them because they live far away. The new skills they learn from the informal school give them something to look forward to," he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Sunday December 31, 2006

ABC Christmas iba!

SHALL WE DANCE

Christmas

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5		Ringside		PBA										TBA		Worst Case Scenario		Araw-Araw Premyo Sa Pasko	Simbang Gabi
ABS-CBN 2	Your Song	Lovespell		The Buzz				TV Patrol World	Goin' Bulilit (6:45 PM)		Rated K (7:45 PM)		Sharon (8:45 PM)		TBA (9:45 PM)		Ako Ang Simula: An ABS-CBN News & Current Affairs YearEnd Special		
AXN		Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines					S.W.A.T					The Amazing Race Asia		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: NY (Season 2)		CSI: Miami (Season 4)	
bTV		The Basketball Show	TV Shopping	NBA: Heat @ Magic					NBA Jam Local	EUROLeague: Unicaja vs. Efes				NBA Fantasy Hoops	NBA: Heat @ Magic				
Cartoon Network																	The Brak Show		
Cinema One				Close To You				Isusumbong Kita Sa Diyos				ABS-CBN Christmas Special				Don't Give Up On Us			
Cinemax		Run, Ronnie Run (2:50 PM)			The Bodyguard (4:45 PM)					The Big Chill				Caved In				The Blob (1958)	
CNN	Next@CNN	World News	Living Golf/Living Golf: Main Sail/Art Of Life	World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News	Inside The Middle East/CNN Business Traveller/Global Citys/Global Challenges	World News	World Sport	Talk Asia	Living Golf/ Revealed /MainSail/Art of Life	World News	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Late Edition Live	
Crime/Suspense		Profiler		Without A Trace		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit		CSI Chronicles: Cold Case Files		Revelations		Threshold		Without A Trace		Oz		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice	
Discovery Channel		How Do They Do It	Moon Machines	American Chopper		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Mythbusters		Hour Asia		Cathay Pacific Signature Series		Built For Champions		Building The Ultimate		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Maya & Miguel	Totally Spies		Kim Possible	Lilo & Stitch	Hannah Montana	American Dragon Yr. 2	Emperor's New School	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Mr. Bean	Wonderful World Of Disney			America's Funniest Home Video	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mortified	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Asian 9-Ball Tour San Miguel			Asian 9-Ball Tour San Miguel			Women's Pro Billiards '06		Great American Events '06		Classic Boxing: Cassius Clay The Early Years		NFL Football: Jets @ Dolphins					
ETC		ET Weekend		Insider Weekend	Rated Oh! 6	Beach Girls		One Tree Hill		America's Next Top Model		Friends	Simple Life 4	Project Runway		Rated Oh! 6	Insider Weekend	Saturday Night Live	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Blow Out 2		Today Show - 1 Hour - Version		Dateline		Trading Spouses		NBC Nightly News	WSJR	Nanny 911		The Director		Showbiz Moms and Dads		NBC Nightly News	Hollywood One On One
Fox News		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Fox Report Saturday		Heartland With John Kasich		The Line Up		The Journal Editorial Report	Beltway Boys	Fox & Friends Sunday						Fox News Live	
GMA 7	Kapuso Movie Festival				S-Files			Mahiwagang Baul		StarStruck: The Next Level		Mel & Joey		All Star K		Daddy Di Do Du		Sunday Night Box Office	
Hallmark Channel				Doc Martin II		The Red Sneakers				Sabrina The Teenage Witch								Midsomer Murders: The Maid Splendour	
HBO		After The Sunset (3:15 PM)				Bridget Jones: The Edge Of Reason				Stealth				Madagascar			HBO What's New In 2007	Anchorman: The Legend Of Ron Burgundy	
Hero TV	Knights Ramune NG	Pretty Cure	Starship Operators	Power Rangers Ninja Storm	Mask Rider Faiz	Justirisers	Power Rangers Dino Thunder	Suzuka	Offside	Baki The Grappler	GPX Cyber Formula	G3	H3 TV Special	Weekend Marathon: Yu-Gi-Oh!/Weekends				PeaceMaker	Starship Operators
IBC 13		Ang Bang Hanap Mo?	Custom Rides	Philippine World Pool C'ship							Mommy Academy	Pinoy Action Hits				Iyo Ang Katarungan	EL SHADDAI		
JackTV				Comedy Central	Premium Blend	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Daily Show Jon Stewart	Distraction	Banzai	American Dad	Family Guy	WWE Smackdown				South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers	Dr Katz
Lifestyle Network	Embellish This	DIY: Crafts	The Great Adventure	Your Private Island	Fine Living Special		Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Wolfgang Puck	Food Network Special		E! Entertainment Special						Fashion Trance	
MTV Philippines	Ultrasound: Kyran	MTV News	MTV News	Celebrity Deathmatch	Homecoming	Score	Boiling Points	Pimp My Ride	Rockets on MTV	Punk'd	Trick It Out	Breaking The Rules: MTV's Top 25 Moments				Homecoming	MTV Hits	MTV Hits	
MYX		Pinoy MYX Countdown				Take 5	MYX Bandarito	MYX News	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Presents			MYX Hit Chart			MYX Backtrax	MYXlog
National Geographic		Mega Asia		Best Of The Week		Show Reel Asia		Mad Labs		Triumph Of Life		Best Of The Week							
NBN		Tinig Ng Bayan		World Pool Championship								The Games Of Your Life Primer	TM Taco Masters Challenge	The Sports List		Best And Brightest			Unlimited Diving
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Quadriga	The Planet	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Pagbubuyog		Net 25 Weekend Report	DWTV Journal: Weekend Edition	Tribe	Convergence	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		Net 25 Weekend Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal Weekend Edition	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Asian Anime Fest: Avatar: The Legend of Aang/ Kappa Mikey		The X's	Danny Phantom	Trollz	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Ikaw Lamang Hanggang Ngayon				Rocky N Rolly				Tres Kantos				Rachel Reveals				New Year's Eve Special
Qtv		Lois And Clark		Elementar Gerad		Bongga Ka Star		Ang Pinaka...		Pop Star Kids		May Trabaho Ka		Sunday Super Sine				Dahil Sa Iyong Paglisan	
RPN 9						World Poker Tour		WWE Experience		WWE Smackdown				Sunday's Big Event					The Working President
SBN 21				Buhay Pinoy		Sheperd's Voice		New Life				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Gabay At Aksyon			
Solar Sports				Motoring Today					Bikini Destination	Party Poker				Boxing: Miranda vs Cotto, Lizzau vs Hurndez				World Game	
Star Movies	GoldenEye (2:15 PM)				Raising Helen (4:45 PM)				National Treasure (6:45 PM)					Star Wars Ep. III: Revenge Of The Sith					Star Wars Ep. III: Revenge Of The Sith
Star World		The Office	Two And A Half Men	NCIS		Business Week Asia	Travel Asia	Ed		Desperate Housewives		Oprah Prime Time		NCIS		Dinner Table For Three		Hollywood Shootout	Oprah Prime Time
Studio 23								Studio 23 Presents Special Edition			Y-Speak		Gag Ito!	US Girls	Desperate Housewives		Digital Tour (10:45 PM)	Badminton Extreme	
UnTV				KNC Show	Ang Dating Daan			Usapang Cristiano				Believer TV		Ang Dating Daan					

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GLOBAL Pinoy
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to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and wherever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

Pinoys, Muslims party in Arab country

They show Christmas' meaning, what interfaith is all about

By Nikko Dizon

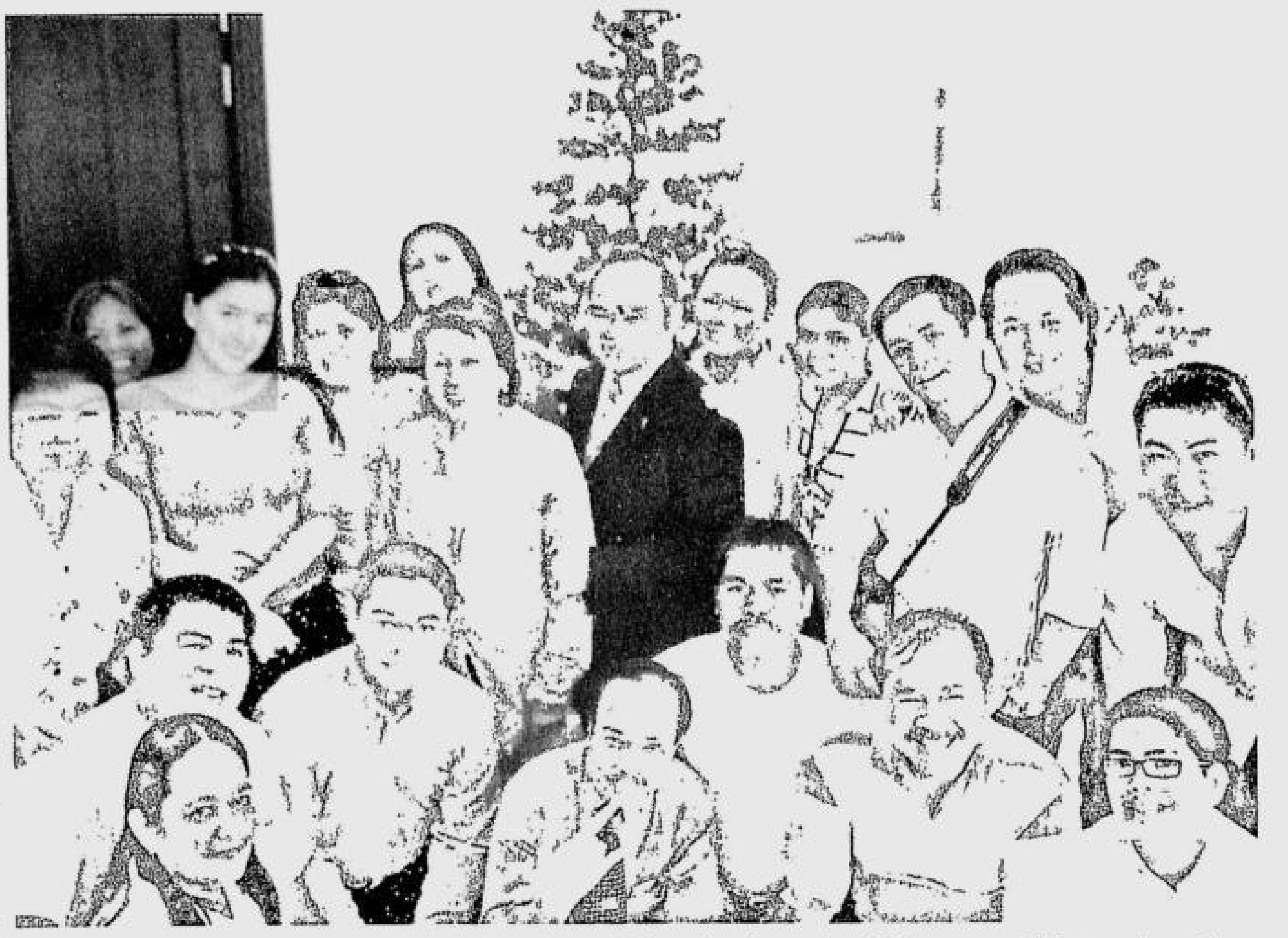
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—At the St. Mary's Catholic Church across a mosque in Bur Dubai, an area in the financial capital of this progressive Arab nation, Filipinos attend midnight Mass to prepare for the birth of Christ.

It's not unusual, too, to receive gifts from Muslim friends or for Filipinos to throw open their doors to compatriots longing for home.

For the thousands of Filipinos living and working in open cities in the Middle East like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, the UAE capital, and Muscat in Oman, Christmas is the time for discovering what interfaith is all about and celebrating the season as one Filipino community.

"We celebrate Christmas here like we do in the Philippines," Leng David, a hotel manager in Dubai, told the INQUIRER.

And, in a heartwarming gesture, David said their Muslim friends join in the Christmas tradition of gift giving. So much so that David and many other Filipinos also give their Muslim friends some presents on Islamic holidays like Eid ul-Adha, which marks the end of the Muslims' pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.



PHILIPPINE Ambassador to United Arab Emirates Libran Cabactulan (center, in suit) hosts a pre-Christmas dinner for "Kumustahan" artists, among them Nanette Inventor, Ara Mina, Ogie Alcasid, right in his house in Abu Dhabi.

Give and take

"It's give and take," Muscat-based Janet Villahermosa said. "We both learn to recognize and respect our respective faiths. During Ramadhan, for example, we don't hold festive parties in deference to their fasting."

Malls in these open cities are adorned with Christmas trimmings and sell holiday décors and gifts as early as November.

But because it is obviously only for commercial purposes, it could be quite difficult to capture the essence of the season, said Louella Duarte, the Philippine Embassy consul in Abu Dhabi.

"That's why we appreciate the efforts of Arab leaders who support the idea of interfaith," she said.

David said that the St. Mary's Church is packed with Filipinos attending the midnight Mass, which is actually held earlier at 8:30 p.m.

Throughout these nine days, one will see everybody smiling at each other.

"It's funny because we look like people possessed," David said. "*Ngiti lang nang ngiti. Mababait lahat. Masaya ang* atmosphere."

Because they live in an open city, David said they could have the usual *Noche Buena* fare that they usually have in the Philippines.

They have ham, cheese

"We have ham and *queso de bola*," David said.

"We can drink wine unlike in Kuwait. We even have San Miguel beer here. It's great that all the food we have in Manila is available here."

Added Villahermosa: "*Kaligayahan na lang namin ang mag*-celebrate *ng Pasko*. We make it a point to celebrate the way we do in the Philippines so that we won't feel so far away from home during this time."

Some Filipinos find themselves lucky enough to have Muslim employers who allow them to take the day off on Christmas Day, or at least give them half the day free.

For those who have to go to work, they make up by going to the parties with their compatriots and Christians of other nationalities.

With their families back in the Philippines, Filipinos spend Christmas as one community.

Community leaders, for one, make it a point to invite fellow Filipinos, especially those who had just arrived from the Philippines and those who are living alone to join in the parties.

"Christmas can be a really emotional time for us because you still think of home," Villahermosa said.

She considers herself luckier than most because her parents and siblings live with her in Muscat.

David said that when the clock strikes 12 on Dec. 25, expect many party-goers to turn somber.

"The drama starts," David said.

A number would cry. Like herself when she first celebrated Christmas seven years ago, alone and away from her family in Manila.

Many would try to call their families in the Philippines at midnight, hoping to greet everybody back home a Merry Christmas but which could be frustrating because it is simply the hour when the lines become clogged with calls.

"*Dito mo na maririnig mo ang linyang: 'Kung pwede lang hindi malayo sa pamilya*,'" David said.

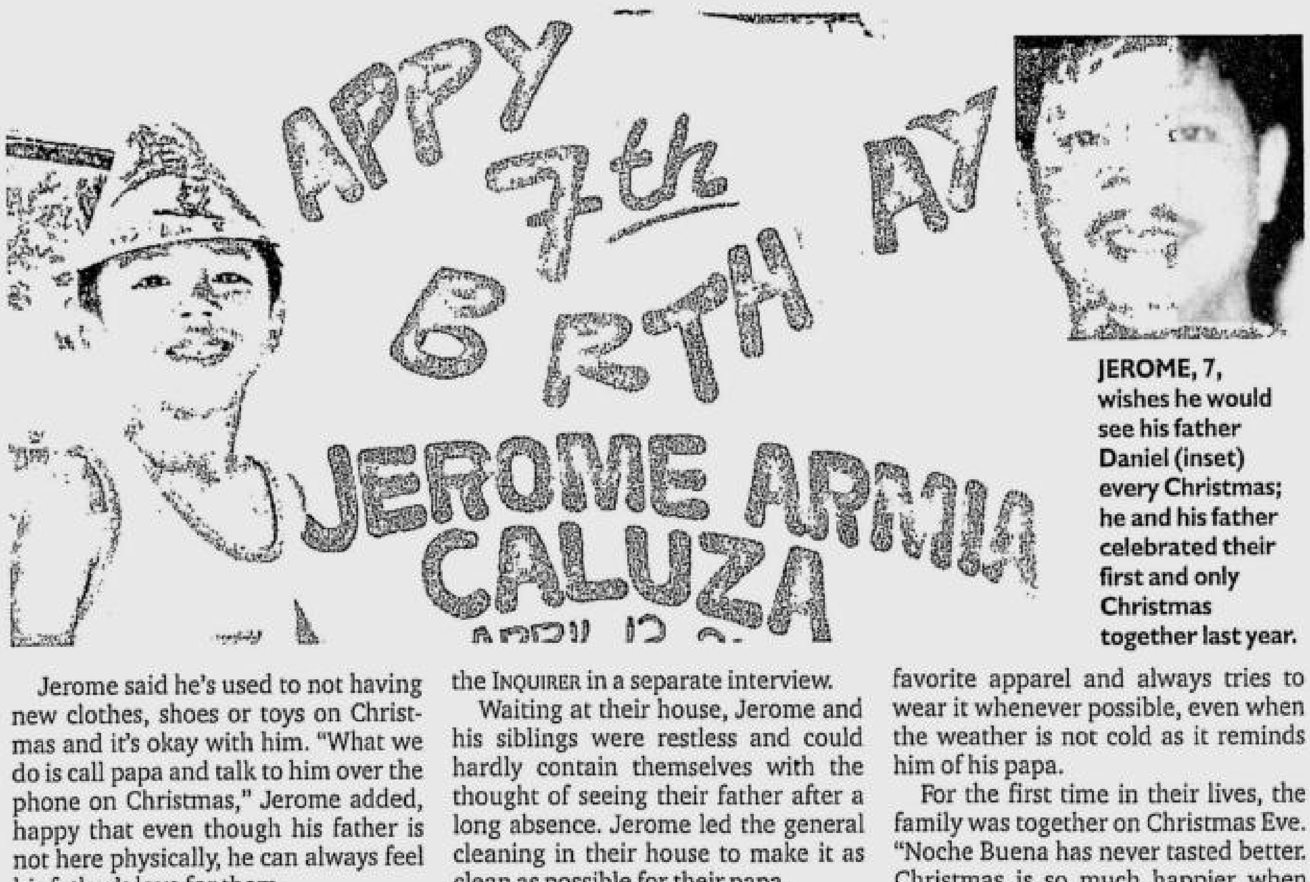
Papa, please come home next Christmas

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

SEVEN-YEAR-OLD GERONIMO "Jerome" Caluza wanted nothing in the world than to have his papa by his side this Christmas season. His father, Daniel, 44, has been working as an electrician in Saudi Arabia for more than 20 years now and has since spent only one Christmas together with his family.

Jerome said that if ever he was made to see only one person on Christmas, he would choose his papa, not Santa Claus. "I love my papa so much and I hope he'll have fun there (in Saudi) this holiday," he continued.

Every Christmas, Jerome never asked his parents for presents. All he wanted was to spend the holidays with his dad to complete their family.



JEROME, 7, wishes he would see his father Daniel (inset) every Christmas; he and his father celebrated their first and only Christmas together last year.

No recollections

Youngest of three, Jerome virtually grew up without his father's presence and had no clear recollections of him because Jerome was only 8 months old when, in December 1999, right before Christmas, his papa had to leave to work again in Saudi Arabia.

Now in first grade at the San Diego Elementary School in San Pablo City, Laguna, Jerome loves Mathematics and has been a constant topnotcher in his class since kindergarten.

"It is my parent's hard work, especially my dad's, that inspires me," Jerome told the INQUIRER. "I know how hard my father is working abroad and I want to make him proud of me someday so I study very hard."

Many times the family would have no money for Noche Buena on Christmas Eve due to delays with the remittances or the money sent by Jerome's father isn't enough. "The money we receive for our Noche Buena, we used to pay off our debts," Jerome said.

It's a good thing Jerome and his two siblings, Daniel Junior, 15, and Nielisa, 12, were raised by their mother not to expect that their father was making a fortune abroad.

Jerome said he's used to not having new clothes, shoes or toys on Christmas and it's okay with him. "What we do is call papa and talk to him over the phone on Christmas," Jerome added, happy that even though his father is not here physically, he can always feel his father's love for them.

Wish granted

Last year, Jerome's wish to spend Christmas with his father was granted. His father came home a couple of weeks before Christmas day.

Jerome remembered jumping happily in their house when his father called to tell them the good news. At last, he would see his father in person whom he initially got to know only by phone, pictures and letters.

"My siblings and I were all very excited," Jerome said, adding that he couldn't wait for his papa to arrive.

The day his father arrived, only his mother, Alice, went to the airport to fetch Daniel as they did not have enough money for all of them to pick him up. "I even borrowed the money I used to get to the airport," Alice told the INQUIRER in a separate interview.

Waiting at their house, Jerome and his siblings were restless and could hardly contain themselves with the thought of seeing their father after a long absence. Jerome led the general cleaning in their house to make it as clean as possible for their papa.

Together at last

When his parents arrived from the airport, Jerome immediately ran to his father and hugged him. "I ran to him and said 'I love you, papa,'" Jerome recalled, teary-eyed after missing his father so much and being able to hug him for the first time.

After they hugged and exchanged greetings, his father handed each one of them special gifts. Jerome received a black leather jacket from Saudi which he immediately tried on and found to be a perfect fit. His mother got a lipstick while his two siblings got their own leather jackets as well.

"I know they were not the most expensive gifts, but they came from papa so I love my jacket very much," Jerome remarked, saying the item is now his favorite apparel and always tries to wear it whenever possible, even when the weather is not cold as it reminds him of his papa.

For the first time in their lives, the family was together on Christmas Eve. "Noche Buena has never tasted better. Christmas is so much happier when papa is around," Jerome said, referring to last year's Christmas.

"We wanted to give something back to our papa so we offered a thanksgiving Mass in his name (the next day)," Jerome recalled as if it was just yesterday.

Later that Christmas day, they surprised their papa with a Christmas party complete with games and a *videoke* machine. "Papa loves to sing. He was so happy, he sang all day," Jerome said. Together, they visited some of their relatives and gave their Christmas greetings.

In March this year, Daniel had to leave for work again in Saudi. And, once more, Jerome and his family celebrated the holidays without the man of the house.

"It's okay, I understand why he's not here right now. I just hope that we get to celebrate Christmas together again next year," Jerome said.

No celebration in Lebanon; they feel luckier than 'Reming' victims

By Nikko Dizon

THEY HAVE GONE THROUGH A WAR AND are now living amid renewed political tensions, but Filipinos in Lebanon are still able to think beyond their own plight.

The Filipino community decided to forego with their usual holiday celebrations in deference to the sufferings of their *kababayans* who were victims of the recent typhoons in Bicol, said Fr. Agustin Advincula, parish priest of the Our Lady of Miraculous Medal in Beirut.

The Catholic Church was the temporary shelter of thousands of Filipino workers, mostly domestic helpers, who fled the war between Israel and the Hezbollah last August.

"Actually, the recent calamities and disasters in our country and the ongoing tension here have inspired us to simplify our activities and focus on the essentials," Agustin told the INQUIRER in an e-mail message.

The Filipino community was actually already preparing for a "*bongga*" celebration, Agustin said, as early as September.

But by late October, Typhoon "Milenyo" brought destruction to Metro Manila and several provinces. In November, a Lebanese Cabinet official was assassinated, which heightened the political tensions there.

"We put things on hold," Agustin said. And ultimately, the community decided to altogether forego with its holiday celebrations.

"And we were glad we did, after what Typhoons 'Reming' and 'Seniang' did to the Bicol Region," he said.

Day of prayers

They celebrated Christmas in the only Christian-Arab nation in the Middle East in the most austere way.

There were no parties, raffle draws, singing contests, said Agustin. There wasn't even a *parol* or a Belen in their homes.

They also did not hold their annual "Day of Gratitude," where employers are invited to join the Mass recognizing their part in the lives of the Filipino workers and are given gifts by their Filipino helpers.

But pray they did.

"We continued with our Simbang Gabi, at 5 a.m. and 5 p.m., and the midnight Masses for Christmas and New Year and the gift-giving for the children," he said, adding:

"We spent a day fasting and praying. We committed ourselves to the 3 o'clock silent prayer for an hour for nine days before Christmas."

These calls to heaven were all for the victims of the calamities in the Philippines, for the peaceful resolution of the ongoing tension, and for the *kababayans* who have escaped from their employers and are still "languishing in our embassy and the government detention center."

"We didn't have the chance to raise funds for the typhoon victims," Agustin said. "Bear in mind that we had to scrap our raffle draw which could have been the source of funds."

"Besides, the volatile situation made us tighten our belts and prepare for eventualities," the priest added.

Agustin said that despite the war, the Filipino community there still feel "luckier than the typhoon victims."

"We experienced the bombings at a distance, though we heard the sound and felt the tremors. Whereas they (typhoon victims) were struggling to save their lives in the midst of a cascading mudslide," Agustin said.

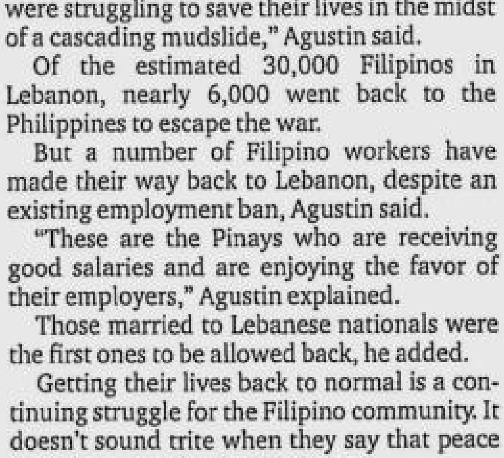
Of the estimated 30,000 Filipinos in Lebanon, nearly 6,000 went back to the Philippines to escape the war.

But a number of Filipino workers have made their way back to Lebanon, despite an existing employment ban, Agustin said.

"These are the Pinays who are receiving good salaries and are enjoying the favor of their employers," Agustin explained.

Those married to Lebanese nationals were the first ones to be allowed back, he added.

Getting their lives back to normal is a continuing struggle for the Filipino community. It doesn't sound trite when they say that peace is all they want for the New Year.



ADVINCULA: No party this time.

Saddam's execution lauded, condemned

PARIS—THE UNITED STATES JOINED ITS arch-foe Iran on Saturday in hailing the justice of Saddam Hussein's execution, but European powers opposed the use of capital punishment even though they condemned the former dictator's crimes in Iraq.

US President George W. Bush said Saddam had received the kind of justice he denied his victims.

Some key US allies expressed discomfort at the execution. And Russia, which opposed the March 20, 2003 invasion to oust the dictator, and the Vatican expressed regret at the hanging which some Muslim leaders said would exacerbate the violence in Iraq.

The Vatican saw the hanging as "tragic news," Vatican spokesperson Frederico Lombardi said. "There is a risk that it feeds the spirit of vengeance and plants the seeds for fresh violence," he said.

Bush called the execution "an important milestone" on the road to building an Iraqi democracy though he warned in a statement it would not end the deadly violence there.

Iran, the influential neighbor of Iraq and arch-foe of the US administration, also welcomed the execution.

"With regards to Saddam's execution, the Iraqi people are the victorious ones, as they were victorious when Saddam fell," said Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Hamid Reza Asefi.

Israel, a strong US ally and enemy of Saddam, also hailed the hanging. "Justice has been done," a high-ranking Israeli official told AFP.

Britain, the main US ally in Iraq, said Saddam Hussein had been "held to account" but reiterated its opposition to the use of the death penalty, as did Australia, another key supporter of the US invasion.

Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said: "No matter what one might think about the death penalty, and the government of Iraq is aware of the Australian government's position on capital punishment, we must also respect the right of sovereign states to pass judgement relating to crimes committed against their people, within their jurisdictions."

But there was also condemnation of the execution.

Russia's foreign ministry expressed regret, saying that international calls for clemency had been ignored.

"Unfortunately, the many appeals from representatives of various countries and international organizations for Iraq's authorities to hold back from capital punishment were not heard," a ministry spokesperson was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

India also condemned the execution. "We had already expressed the hope the execution would not be carried out. We are disappointed that it has been," said foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee in a statement.

The ruling Hamas movement in the Palestinian territories called the execution of Saddam a "political assassination."

Libya declared three days of national mourning after the execution, with official media also calling Saddam a "prisoner of war." Malaysia, current chair of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, warned the execution of Saddam could trigger more bloodshed.

"A lot of people, the international community generally, are not in favor of the hanging and question the due process that took place," Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar told AFP.

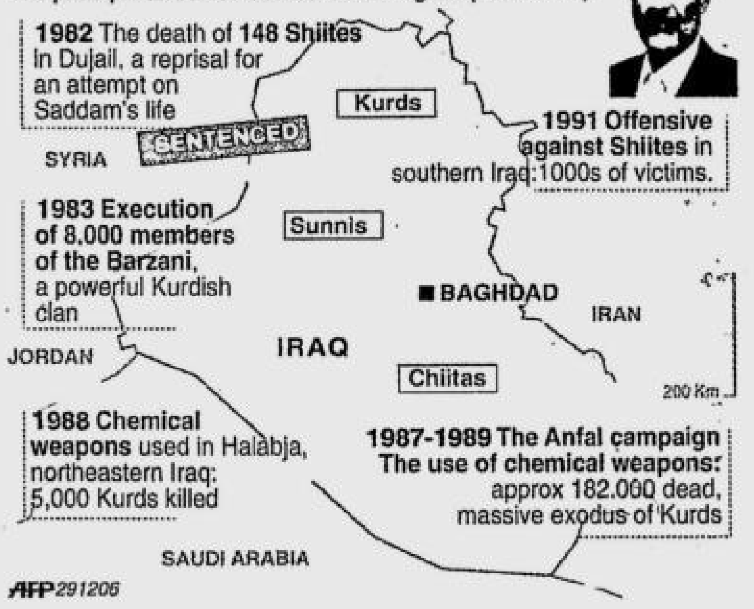
Outside of Britain, European reaction, led by the European Union (EU), focused on opposing the death penalty.

"The EU condemns the crimes committed by Saddam and also the death penalty," Cristina Gallach, a spokesperson for Javier Solana, the EU high representative for foreign affairs, told AFP.

France, a high profile opponent of the Iraq invasion at the United Nations, called on Iraqis to end their divisions. *AFP*

The crimes of Saddam Hussein

The principal atrocities blamed on the regime (1979 -2003)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SENTENCED
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Kurds
1991 Offensive against Shiites in southern Iraq: 1000s of victims.
1983 Execution of 8,000 members of the Barzani, a powerful Kurdish clan
Sunnis
BAGHDAD
IRAN
JORDAN
IRAQ
Chiitas
200 Km
1988 Chemical weapons used in Halabja, northeastern Iraq: 5,000 Kurds killed
1987-1989 The Anfal campaign The use of chemical weapons: approx 182.000 dead, massive exodus of Kurds
SAUDI ARABIA

AFP 291206

National mourning for Gerald Ford begins

PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA—SIX DAYS OF national mourning for former President Gerald Ford began with military honors and a simple family prayer service at his parish church as members of the public waited for hours for a chance to pay respects before he left California for the last time.

Former first lady Betty Ford, 88, and her children watched as uniformed enlisted men from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Marines on Friday carried Ford's flag-draped casket into St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, where the Fords worshipped for 30 years after retiring from Washington.

In solemn and crisply executed ritual, a Marine Corps band played the hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past" and a sailor honored Ford's Navy service by carrying an ebony staff flying the presidential seal.

"We receive the body of our brother, Gerald, for burial," the Rev. Robert Certain, church rector, said as the casket was carried inside. It was then placed before the blond-wood altar and wreaths of white flowers, and an Army general escorted Ms Ford and the family to their seats.

The private family service was followed by a visitation for invited friends including former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Congressman Jack Kemp and former California Governor Pete Wilson. When it ended, Ms Ford left in a motorcade headed back to the Ford home in the neighboring city of Rancho Mirage.

Ford was to lie in repose for public viewing of the closed casket until Saturday morning.

About 5:20 p.m., an hour behind schedule, buses began bringing people from a tennis center 8 km away. Mourners ranging from children to the elderly walked through quickly and then reboarded their buses.

A modest early turnout at the staging area grew during the evening. No official count was kept, but buses carrying about 50 people per trip came and went steadily. The trip took about three hours by late Friday. *AP*

FORMER first lady Betty Ford (center) and Maj. Gen. Guy C. Swan III (right) watch as the casket of former US President Gerald Ford arrives for state funeral services at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Palm Desert, California, Dec. 29. REUTERS

WORLDBRIEFS

Car bomb kills 31

KUFA, IRAQ—At least 31 people were killed on Saturday when a car bomb exploded in a fish market in the central Iraqi Shiite city of Kufa just hours after the execution of ousted dictator Saddam Hussein. Doctor Monther al-Ithari, the health director in Najaf province, told AFP that at least 31 people were killed and 58 wounded in the attack, most of them women and children shopping ahead of the Eid al-Adha holiday. Colonel Ali Jrawi of the Kufa police said that the car, a Korean-made Kia, had been parked in a popular fish market when it exploded, ripping through the weekend crowd. *AFP*

Aceh election

JAKARTA—A former rebel jailed by Jakarta has won a landslide victory in the first direct elections for governor of Aceh province, according to official results Friday which confirmed earlier forecasts. The Dec. 11 polls were seen as consolidating a peace accord signed last year which ended decades of bloodshed between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian military. Former GAM spokesperson Irwandi Yusuf and his running mate Muhammad Nazar won 38.20 percent of the vote, election commission official Nasir Zalba told AFP. Their nearest rivals in the first direct elections for provincial governor and vice governor of Aceh were trailing on 16.62 percent. Yusuf was jailed in 2003 for rebellion and eventually fled when the tsunami struck on Dec. 26, 2004, flooding his prison. *AFP*

Somalia victory

MOGADISHU—Somalia's prime minister swept into Mogadishu in an armored convoy on Friday a day after his Ethiopian-backed forces drove Islamist rivals from the city they had ruled by sharia law since June. Ali Mohamed Gedi's arrival in a 22-car convoy, including six pick-ups mounted with heavy weaponry, crowned a dramatic turnaround in the Horn of Africa country after an Ethiopian invasion by land and air to combat the Islamists. Crowds lined the streets of the bullet-scarred coastal capital as the Western-backed interim government's prime minister drove in smiling and waving. *Reuters*

Police charged

ATLANTA—Seven New Orleans police officers were indicted Thursday on charges of first-degree murder or attempted murder in connection with the deaths of two men on a bridge six days after Hurricane Katrina struck. Four other civilians suffered gunshot wounds in the episode, which took place on Sept. 4, 2005. No officers were hurt. The shootings occurred while much of the New Orleans area was still under water, communication among officers was poor and the city was roiled with chaos and dead bodies. *NYT*

Gas price battle

MOSCOW—Talks between Belarus and Russia over the future price of the gas Moscow will supply to Minsk are to continue Saturday after the two sides failed to reach agreement, an official said. "The meeting is over for today, it will continue tomorrow," Gazprom spokesperson Sergei Kipryanov told Russian television Friday night. *AFP*

Huge ice shelf breaks off in Canadian Arctic

CALGARY—A CHUNK OF ICE BIGGER than the area of Manhattan broke from an ice shelf in Canada's far north and could wreak havoc if it starts to float westward toward oil-drilling regions and shipping lanes next summer, a researcher said on Friday.

Global warming could be one cause of the break of the Ayles Ice Shelf at Ellesmere Island, which occurred in the summer of 2005 but was only detected recently by satellite photos, said Luke Copland, assistant professor at the University of Ottawa's geography department.

It was the largest such break in nearly three decades, casting an ice floe with an area of 66 sq. km adrift in the Arctic Ocean, said Copland, who specializes in the study of glaciers and ice masses. Manhattan has an area of 61 sq. km.

The mass is now 50 sq. km in size.

"The Arctic is all frozen up for the winter and it's stuck in the sea ice about 50 km off the coast," he said.

"The risk is that next summer, as that sea ice melts, this large ice island can then move itself around off the coast and one potential path for it is to make its way westward toward the Beaufort Sea, and the Beaufort Sea is where there is lots of oil and gas exploration, oil rigs and shipping." The break went undetected when it happened due primarily to the remoteness of the northern coast of Ellesmere island, which is only about 800 km from the North Pole.

The speed of the crack and drift-off shocked scientists.

Satellite images showed the 15-km long crack, then the ice floating about 1 km from the coast within about an hour, Copland said.

Copland said the break was likely due to a combination of low accumulations of sea ice around the mass's edges as high winds blew it away, as well as one of the Arctic's warmest temperatures on record. The region was 3 degrees Celsius above average in the summer of 2005, he said. *Reuters*

China boosts military spending, citing volatile Asia-Pacific security

BEIJING—CHINA NEEDS A STRONG and credible military, the government said Friday in a key policy document, citing what it termed security challenges it cannot ignore, such as Taiwan's independence drive.

North Korea's nuclear program and a strengthening US-Japan alliance are also evolving factors that make Asia-Pacific security more volatile, forcing China to boost its armed forces, the 2006 Defense White Paper argued.

"To build a powerful and fortified national defense is a strategic task of China's modernization drive," said the white paper, the fifth ever issued by Beijing.

It said that China's defense expenditures had grown by more than 15 percent every year since 1990, although that figure falls to 9.6 percent once inflation is taken into account.

China's defense white papers are scrutinized carefully by overseas observers for clues about future policies and the fate of the 2.3-million-strong People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest military.

"The struggle to oppose and contain the separatist forces for 'Taiwan independence' and their activities remains a hard one," said the white paper.

The Taiwan authorities still pose "a grave threat to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits and in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole," it said.

China and Taiwan have been separated since the end of a civil war in 1949, but Beijing still considers the island part of its territory, awaiting reunification, by force if necessary.

Looking at the overall situation in the Asia-Pacific, the paper argued that "new changes have occurred in the hotspots in the region." "The United States and Japan are strengthening their military alliance … (Japan's) military posture is becoming more external-oriented," it said.

"(North Korea) has launched missile tests and conducted a nuclear test." Addressing its own nuclear capability, China said it was based on "a self-defensive nuclear strategy." "Its fundamental goal is to deter other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China," it said.

China remains firmly committed to the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, it said.

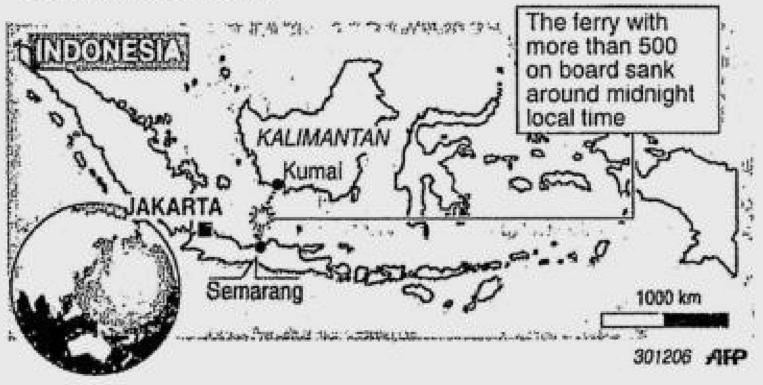
"It unconditionally undertakes not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and stands for the comprehensive prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons." Looking to the future, the white paper pointed to the need to boost China's capacity to win high-tech wars and those fought at sea.

By the middle of the century, China aims to be capable of winning "information wars," a form of conflict in which high-tech operations such as attacks on the adversary's computer systems play a crucial role. *AFP*

More than 500 missing in Indon ferry sinking

Indonesia ferry accident

Hundreds missing after ferry capsized off the coast of central Java Friday


INDONESIA
KALIMANTAN
Kumai
JAKARTA
Semarang
The ferry with more than 500 on board sank around midnight local time
1000 km

301206 AFP

JAKARTA—MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE WENT missing Saturday after an Indonesian ferry sank in a storm off the coast of Java, where search and rescue efforts were called off due to rough seas.

Officials said they lost contact with the vessel around midnight when it was off the Java coast. About two dozen people were rescued, but there were 545 passengers believed to be on board.

The ferry was licensed to carry 1,250 passengers. Of the two lifeboats found so far, one of them was empty.

The ferry left Kumai in Central Kalimantan province en route to Semarang in Central Java 420 km away, and sank near Mandalika island off the Java coast. It was not known exactly where it went down.

"Rescue efforts have been hampered because of bad weather. Nine people have been rescued so far," Transport Minister Hatta Radjasa said on ElShinta radio.

A port official named Sumardi later told AFP that 15 more people had been rescued.

Sumardi said there were 545 passengers listed on the manifest of the "Senopati Nusantara" ("Archipelago Commander"), which had been due in Semarang late Friday after what should have been a 19-hour voyage.

MetroTV news quoted a port authority official saying that contact was lost with the vessel sometime before midnight.

The transport minister said port officials should have not allowed the ferry to sail in bad weather conditions.

"At this moment the waves are over four meters high and the weather is unpredictable." *AFP*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

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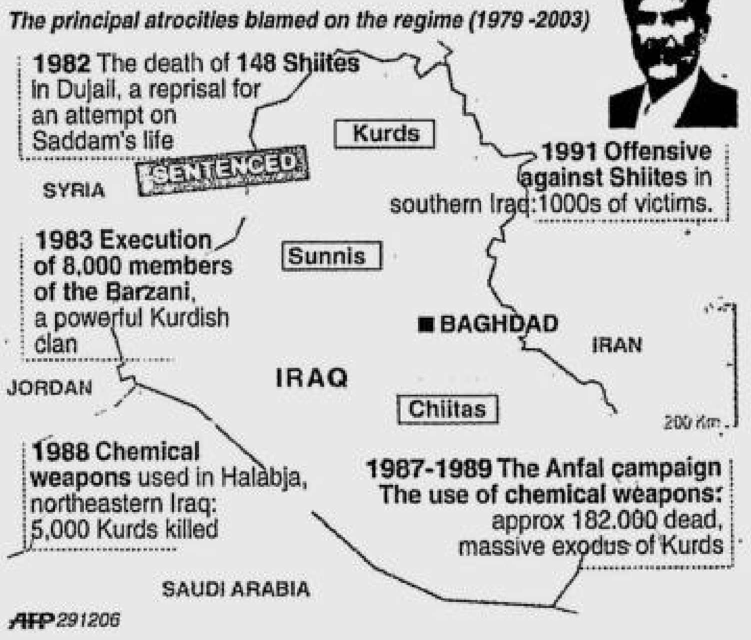
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AFP 291206

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WORLDBRIEFS

Car bomb kills 31

KUFA, IRAQ—At least 31 people were killed on Saturday when a car bomb exploded in a fish market in the central Iraqi Shiite city of Kufa just hours after the execution of ousted dictator Saddam Hussein. Doctor Monther al-Ithari, the health director in Najaf province, told AFP that at least 31 people were killed and 58 wounded in the attack, most of them women and children shopping ahead of the Eid al-Adha holiday. Colonel Ali Jrawi of the Kufa police said that the car, a Korean-made Kia, had been parked in a popular fish market when it exploded, ripping through the weekend crowd. *AFP*

Aceh election

JAKARTA—A former rebel jailed by Jakarta has won a landslide victory in the first direct elections for governor of Aceh province, according to official results Friday which confirmed earlier forecasts. The Dec. 11 polls were seen as consolidating a peace accord signed last year which ended decades of bloodshed between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian military. Former GAM spokesperson Irwandi Yusuf and his running mate Muhammad Nazar won 38.20 percent of the vote, election commission official Nasir Zalba told AFP. Their nearest rivals in the first direct elections for provincial governor and vice governor of Aceh were trailing on 16.62 percent. Yusuf was jailed in 2003 for rebellion and eventually fled when the tsunami struck on Dec. 26, 2004, flooding his prison. *AFP*

Somalia victory

MOGADISHU—Somalia's prime minister swept into Mogadishu in an armored convoy on Friday a day after his Ethiopian-backed forces drove Islamist rivals from the city they had ruled by sharia law since June. Ali Mohamed Gedi's arrival in a 22-car convoy, including six pick-ups mounted with heavy weaponry, crowned a dramatic turnaround in the Horn of Africa country after an Ethiopian invasion by land and air to combat the Islamists. Crowds lined the streets of the bullet-scarred coastal capital as the Western-backed interim government's prime minister drove in smiling and waving. *Reuters*

Police charged

ATLANTA—Seven New Orleans police officers were indicted Thursday on charges of first-degree murder or attempted murder in connection with the deaths of two men on a bridge six days after Hurricane Katrina struck. Four other civilians suffered gunshot wounds in the episode, which took place on Sept. 4, 2005. No officers were hurt. The shootings occurred while much of the New Orleans area was still under water, communication among officers was poor and the city was roiled with chaos and dead bodies. *NYT*

Gas price battle

MOSCOW—Talks between Belarus and Russia over the future price of the gas Moscow will supply to Minsk are to continue Saturday after the two sides failed to reach agreement, an official said. "The meeting is over for today, it will continue tomorrow," Gazprom spokesperson Sergei Kipryanov told Russian television Friday night. *AFP*

Huge ice shelf breaks off in Canadian Arctic

CALGARY—A CHUNK OF ICE BIGGER than the area of Manhattan broke from an ice shelf in Canada's far north and could wreak havoc if it starts to float westward toward oil-drilling regions and shipping lanes next summer, a researcher said on Friday.

Global warming could be one cause of the break of the Ayles Ice Shelf at Ellesmere Island, which occurred in the summer of 2005 but was only detected recently by satellite photos, said Luke Copland, assistant professor at the University of Ottawa's geography department.

It was the largest such break in nearly three decades, casting an ice floe with an area of 66 sq. km adrift in the Arctic Ocean, said Copland, who specializes in the study of glaciers and ice masses. Manhattan has an area of 61 sq. km.

The mass is now 50 sq. km in size.

"The Arctic is all frozen up for the winter and it's stuck in the sea ice about 50 km off the coast," he said.

"The risk is that next summer, as that sea ice melts, this large ice island can then move itself around off the coast and one potential path for it is to make its way westward toward the Beaufort Sea, and the Beaufort Sea is where there is lots of oil and gas exploration, oil rigs and shipping." The break went undetected when it happened due primarily to the remoteness of the northern coast of Ellesmere island, which is only about 800 km from the North Pole.

The speed of the crack and drift-off shocked scientists.

Satellite images showed the 15-km long crack, then the ice floating about 1 km from the coast within about an hour, Copland said.

Copland said the break was likely due to a combination of low accumulations of sea ice around the mass's edges as high winds blew it away, as well as one of the Arctic's warmest temperatures on record. The region was 3 degrees Celsius above average in the summer of 2005, he said. *Reuters*

China boosts military spending, citing volatile Asia-Pacific security

BEIJING—CHINA NEEDS A STRONG and credible military, the government said Friday in a key policy document, citing what it termed security challenges it cannot ignore, such as Taiwan's independence drive.

North Korea's nuclear program and a strengthening US-Japan alliance are also evolving factors that make Asia-Pacific security more volatile, forcing China to boost its armed forces, the 2006 Defense White Paper argued.

"To build a powerful and fortified national defense is a strategic task of China's modernization drive," said the white paper, the fifth ever issued by Beijing.

It said that China's defense expenditures had grown by more than 15 percent every year since 1990, although that figure falls to 9.6 percent once inflation is taken into account.

China's defense white papers are scrutinized carefully by overseas observers for clues about future policies and the fate of the 2.3-million-strong People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest military.

"The struggle to oppose and contain the separatist forces for 'Taiwan independence' and their activities remains a hard one," said the white paper.

The Taiwan authorities still pose "a grave threat to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits and in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole," it said.

China and Taiwan have been separated since the end of a civil war in 1949, but Beijing still considers the island part of its territory, awaiting reunification, by force if necessary.

Looking at the overall situation in the Asia-Pacific, the paper argued that "new changes have occurred in the hotspots in the region." "The United States and Japan are strengthening their military alliance … (Japan's) military posture is becoming more external-oriented," it said.

"(North Korea) has launched missile tests and conducted a nuclear test." Addressing its own nuclear capability, China said it was based on "a self-defensive nuclear strategy." "Its fundamental goal is to deter other countries from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against China," it said.

China remains firmly committed to the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances, it said.

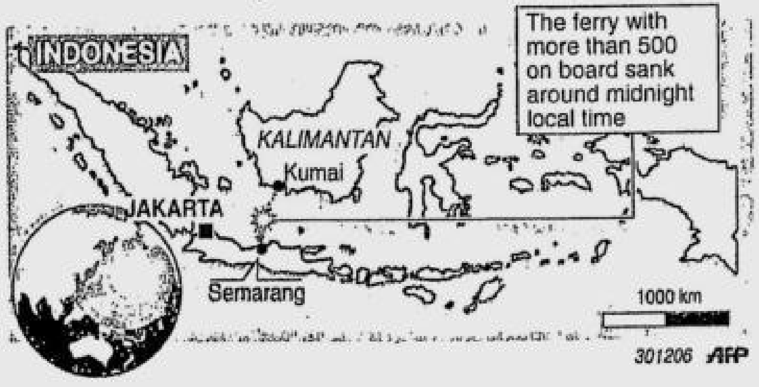
"It unconditionally undertakes not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or nuclear-weapon-free zones, and stands for the comprehensive prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons." Looking to the future, the white paper pointed to the need to boost China's capacity to win high-tech wars and those fought at sea.

By the middle of the century, China aims to be capable of winning "information wars," a form of conflict in which high-tech operations such as attacks on the adversary's computer systems play a crucial role. *AFP*

More than 500 missing in Indon ferry sinking

Indonesia ferry accident

Hundreds missing after ferry capsized off the coast of central Java Friday


INDONESIA
The ferry with more than 500 on board sank around midnight local time
KALIMANTAN
Kumai
JAKARTA
Semarang
1000 km

301206 AFP

JAKARTA—MORE THAN 500 PEOPLE WENT missing Saturday after an Indonesian ferry sank in a storm off the coast of Java, where search and rescue efforts were called off due to rough seas.

Officials said they lost contact with the vessel around midnight when it was off the Java coast. About two dozen people were rescued, but there were 545 passengers believed to be on board.

The ferry was licensed to carry 1,250 passengers. Of the two lifeboats found so far, one of them was empty.

The ferry left Kumai in Central Kalimantan province en route to Semarang in Central Java 420 km away, and sank near Mandalika island off the Java coast. It was not known exactly where it went down.

"Rescue efforts have been hampered because of bad weather. Nine people have been rescued so far," Transport Minister Hatta Radjasa said on ElShinta radio.

A port official named Sumardi later told AFP that 15 more people had been rescued.

Sumardi said there were 545 passengers listed on the manifest of the "Senopati Nusantara" ("Archipelago Commander"), which had been due in Semarang late Friday after what should have been a 19-hour voyage.

MetroTV news quoted a port authority official saying that contact was lost with the vessel sometime before midnight.

The transport minister said port officials should have not allowed the ferry to sail in bad weather conditions.

"At this moment the waves are over four meters high and the weather is unpredictable." *AFP*

Sunday SPORTS

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Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

WHAT'S INSIDE
Kobe's 58 still fails LA /A22
Out of shape, King Tiger skips PGA season opener in Hawaii /A22

BARRERA REMATCH

Manny given until Monday to accept offer

A DAY AFTER OFFERING MANny Pacquiao a tempting 50-50 purse split, Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer has given the Filipino boxing superstar only until Monday to either accept or reject a proposed fight with world super featherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera.

"Pay-per-view deadlines force us to impose a deadline of Monday (Tuesday in RP), Jan. 1, for Team Pacquiao to either accept or decline our offer," Schaefer said in the website Boxingtalk.

Schaefer, however, clarified that he does not wish to negotiate with Bob Arum, as the latter "has no promotional right to Manny Pacquiao."

Arum is top honcho of Top Rank which struck a deal with Pacquiao on Thursday to hold and promote the Filipino's next few fights. On top of this agreement is a $5 million purse that Arum promised Pacquiao for his rematch with Barrera.

Schaefer said he expects Pacquiao and his team to understand that if the projected fight goes to purse bid, the split would be 75-25 in favor of Barrera, who holds the World Boxing Council belt.

Arum, who flew into the country last Dec. 26, had earlier offered Barrera a $2.5 million purse to face Pacquiao on April 28 in Las Vegas.

At a hastily arranged press conference last Thursday at the Manila Hotel, Pacquiao also announced that he had chosen Arum as his promoter for the next four years.

The Filipino ring icon's decision to stick it out with Arum did not sit too well with his American trainer Freddie Roach and manager Shelly Finkel.

Both had tried to convince Pacquiao to hook up with Golden Boy Promotions of promoter-boxer Oscar De La Hoya which tendered a better long-term deal.

Following the press conference, Schaefer announced GBP's own package, including the 50-50 split with Barrera.

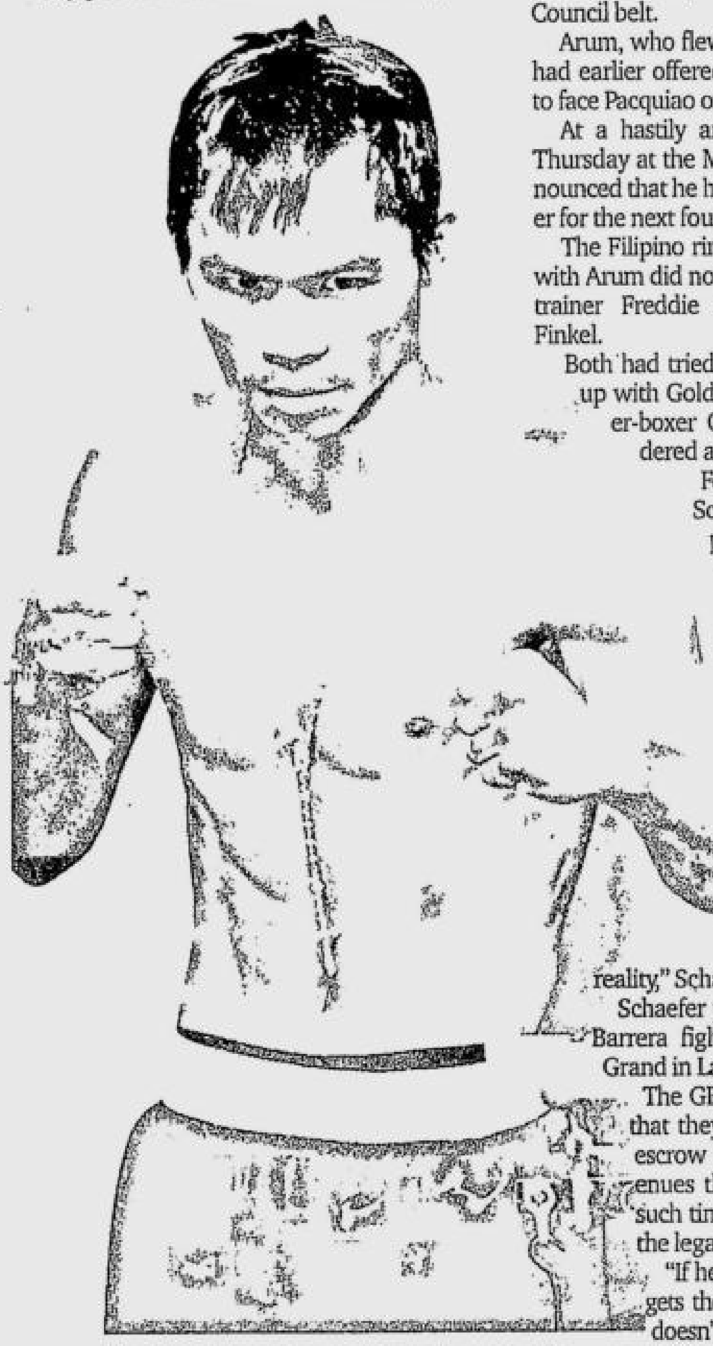
Arum said Schaefer's move was a way of opening up the negotiation process, although the latter maintained that GBP does not wish to negotiate with him.

"Our offer was not intended as a negotiation, but to present a fair and lucrative offer to make this fight a reality," Schaefer said.

Schaefer proposed to hold the Pacquiao-Barrera fight on March 17 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

The GBP top honcho also emphasized that they are willing to deposit into an escrow account all promotional revenues that will be due Pacquiao, until such time that the court decides who is the legal promoter for the Filipino.

"If he (Arum) should win the case, he gets the money. And if he does not, he doesn't deserve it," Schaefer said. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*



GOLDEN OFFER: Manny Pacquiao "has last say." AP

Gabica-De Luna bows to Taiwanese tandem

THE FILIPINO PAIR OF DOHA ASIAN Games gold medalist Antonio Gabica and Jeffrey de Luna bowed to Chinese Taipei's Wu Chia-ching and Yang Ching-shun, 7-9, Saturday and missed the finals of 2006 Mezz Crowd Nine Cup Invitational Scotch doubles at the Crowd Nine Billiard Hall in Tokyo.

Gabica and De Luna will play the South Koreans, which lost to the Japanese, 8-9, also Saturday, for third place.

The Japanese pair of former world champion Kunihiko Takahashi and 17-year-old Hayato Hijikata, the 2005 world junior runner-up, nipped the Korean tandem of Jeong Young-hwa and Kim Woong-dae.

The Taiwanese duo of Wu, the former World Pool champion, and Yang reached the hill in the 15th rack of the race-to-10 showdown.

The winner between the hosts Japanese and the heavily favored Taiwanese will pocket the 1-million yen (about $8,400) champion's purse.

The runner-up pair in the four-nation invitational tournament gets 600,000 yen; the third placer 400,000 yen, and the fourth placer 300,000 yen.

In an interesting battle between 17-year-olds that served as appetizer for the tournament, Hijikata beat Wu, 9-7. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

LYN RILLON

LOST MAGIC: Gabica (left) and De Luna

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Even 'His Airness' couldn't win this game

CHICAGO—MICHAEL JORDAN and his wife, Juanita, divorced Friday after 17 years of marriage.

"Michael and Juanita Jordan mutually and amicably decided to end their 17-year marriage," the couple said in a statement issued through their lawyers. "A judgment for dissolution of their marriage was entered today. There will be no further statements."

Michael Jordan's lawyer, Frederick J. Sperling, declined to comment.

In court documents filed Friday with the Lake County Circuit Court, the couple said "irreconcilable differences have caused an irretrievable breakdown of the marriage." The couple said attempts to reconcile had failed and future ones "would be impractical and not in the best interests of the family."

Juanita Jordan previously filed for divorce in January 2002, but withdrew her petition a month later when the couple announced a reconciliation.

The couple met at a Chicago restaurant during his second season with the Bulls and were married Sept. 2, 1989, in Las Vegas. They have three children: Jeffrey, 18, Marcus, 16, and Jasmine, 14.

The 43-year-old Jordan, a part-owner of the Charlotte Bobcats, led the Bulls to six NBA titles and was a five-time league MVP.

He lives in Chicago; Juanita Jordan, 47, lives in Highland Park, Illinois.

MICHAEL and Juanita in happier times AP

The Jordans, who have lived separately since February, will share custody of their children.

"The co-petitioners acknowledge that although their marriage is ending, they desire to resolve all of the issues surrounding the dissolution of marriage." *AP*

Yao to get injury update

HOUSTON—YAO MING PLANS to meet with doctors next week for an update on how his injured right knee is healing.

Yao told KRIV-TV in Houston on Friday that he hopes for a better prognosis than the one doctors initially provided—that he would be out of action until early February.

The Rockets center fractured the right tibial plateau under his knee Dec. 23 when he jumped to block a shot and his knee got caught under Tim Thomas' body. Yao immediately grabbed his knee and screamed in pain. Yao was averaging 26 points and nine rebounds before the injury.

"It's really hard," Yao said. "This is the best year I have ever had for my team and for me personally." *AP*

Paul sidelined a month

LOS ANGELES—NEW ORLEANS Hornets guard Chris Paul is expected to be sidelined for at least a month because of an ankle injury, the NBA team said on Friday.

Paul, leading scorer for the Hornets this season with an average of 18.4 points, severely sprained his right ankle in Tuesday's 102-94 loss to Seattle.

"The injury to Chris is unfortunate, especially in light of the fact that we've been without three of our top players in Peja Stojakovic, David West and Bobby Jackson for an extended period," Hornets general manager Jeff Bower said.

"But despite our injury troubles, credit is due to coach (Byron) Scott and our players for the resiliency and toughness they've shown through this stretch." Guard Stojakovic has missed 15 games following back surgery, forward West has missed 21. *Reuters*

Barone replaces Fratello

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE—TONY Barone Sr. will finish the season as the Memphis Grizzlies' coach, then return to the front office as director of player personnel.

Barone agreed to replace Mike Fratello on Thursday a couple hours after Jerry West, the team's president of basketball operations, fired the franchise's winningest coach. West said Barone has an extensive basketball background .

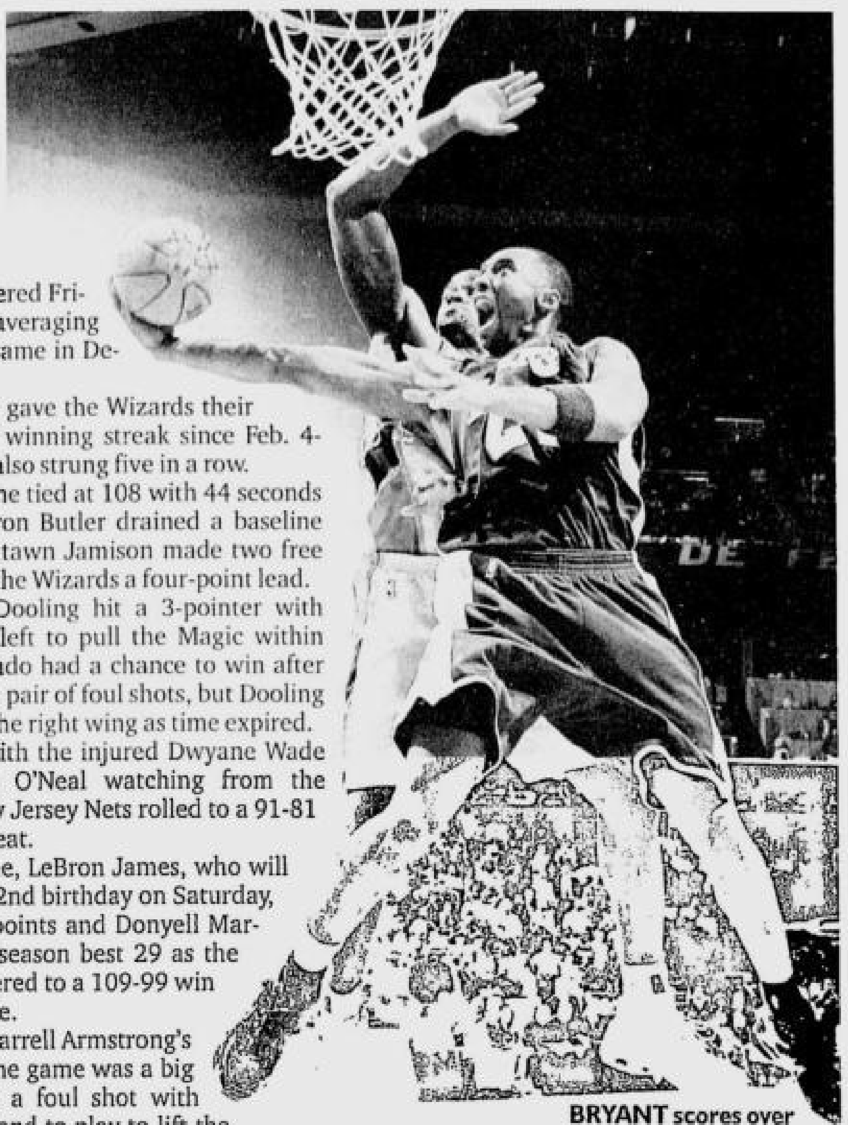
"When he leaves here as a coach, he is going to go back to the front office and his position where he is, and he will have a better feel going forward what we need as a team," West said Friday at a news conference.

West said he talked with owner Michael Heisley on Wednesday, then watched the Grizzlies play without enthusiasm and lose for the 11th time in 12 games to the Milwaukee Bucks. *AP*

TRIPLE OVERTIME LOSS

Kobe's 58 still fails LA

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—KOBE Bryant poured in a season-high 58 points, but it wasn't enough to stop the Charlotte Bobcats from pouncing for a triple-overtime victory over his Lakers on Friday.



BRYANT scores over Okafor AFP

Charlotte's Emeka Okafor was able to dominate the paint, and Matt Carroll scored a career-high 27 points off the bench as Charlotte ultimatedly downed the Lakers, 133-124, in a National Basketball Association contest.

Okafor had 22 points and a franchise-record 25 rebounds for the Bobcats, who picked up a victory in the first triple-overtime game in club history in front of the largest crowd ever to see a game in Charlotte.

Bryant shot 22-of-45 from the field and 10-of-12 from the line to record the second-highest scoring performance in the NBA this season. Washington guard Gilbert Arenas scored 60 points against the Lakers on Dec. 17.

However, in the third extra session, Bryant committed one of the cardinal sins of defense.

With his team trailing by two points with 1:14 left, he fouled reserve Derek Anderson, who was attempting a 3-pointer.

Anderson nailed all three foul shots to make it 129-124, and Los Angeles was unable to get any closer.

On the ensuing possession, Bryant fouled out, committing a charge on a wild drive to the basket but leaving with the third-highest scoring game of his career.

Last season, Bryant scored a franchise-record 81 points against Toronto and 62 points in a game against Dallas.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas scored 14 of his 36 points in the decisive fourth quarter to lift the Washington Wizards to a 112-111 victory over Orlando.

It marked the 12th time this month Arenas has reached the 30-point plateau. A two-time All-Star, he entered Friday's matchup averaging 35 points per game in December.

The triumph gave the Wizards their first five-game winning streak since Feb. 4-12, when they also strung five in a row.

With the game tied at 108 with 44 seconds remaining, Caron Butler drained a baseline jumper and Antawn Jamison made two free throws to give the Wizards a four-point lead.

But Keyon Dooling hit a 3-pointer with three seconds left to pull the Magic within 112-111. Orlando had a chance to win after Butler missed a pair of foul shots, but Dooling misfired from the right wing as time expired.

In Miami, with the injured Dwyane Wade and Shaquille O'Neal watching from the bench, the New Jersey Nets rolled to a 91-81 win over the Heat.

In Milwaukee, LeBron James, who will celebrate his 22nd birthday on Saturday, poured in 32 points and Donyell Marshall added a season best 29 as the Cavaliers powered to a 109-99 win over Milwaukee.

In Detroit, Darrell Armstrong's only point of the game was a big one, dropping a foul shot with less than a second to play to lift the Indiana Pacers to a 93-92 win over the Detroit Pistons. *Reuters, AFP*

Complete Friday results

Chicago 107, Toronto 97; Washington 112, Orlando 111; Charlotte 133, LA Lakers 124 (3OT); New Jersey 91, Miami 81; Cleveland 109, Milwaukee 99; Indiana 93, Detroit 92; N.O./ Oklahoma City 99, Denver 89; Minnesota 101, Seattle 82

NBA ON TV

Game Today (December 31, Sunday)

8 a.m.—Miami vs Orlando (replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)

Out of shape, King Tiger skips PGA season opener in Hawaii

KAPALUA, HAWAII—TIGER WOODS DECIDED Friday to skip the season-opening Mercedes-Benz Championship, meaning the PGA Tour's "new era in golf" will begin next week amid old questions about the absence of its biggest star.

Woods, who was skiing with his family last week in Colorado, said he did not have time to get his game ready and wanted to spend more time with his family.

He has won six consecutive PGA Tour events, a streak that will remain on hold until Jan. 25 at the Buick Invitational in San Diego, where Woods is the two-time defending champion.

Woods said on his Web site that he has spent the last 12 days skiing and relaxing with family and friends, "but I've basically been away from golf since winning the Target World Challenge" on Dec. 17.

"I considered playing in next week's Mercedes-Benz Championship, the official launch of the new FedExCup, but I just haven't been able to prepare," Woods said. "I usually spend at least one week working on my game before a tournament, and have been unable to do that this year."

It was the second straight year Woods will not play the winners-only tournament. He missed last year to spend time with his father, whose health was failing from cancer. Earl Woods died May 3. The only other time Woods did not go to Kapalua was in 2003, when he was recovering from knee surgery.

TIGER: Time with family AP

"Hopefully, everyone will understand," Woods said. "Obviously, this was a tough decision because Gary Planos and his staff at Kapalua Resort always do such a great job with the event."

Planos, the vice president of operations at Kapalua and tournament host, looked for bright spots on a day of gathering clouds off the west coast of Maui.

"Obviously, we're disappointed, but we've got a championship to run next week," he said. "Players and weather are risks in this business that I wish I had better control of."

Woods' absence this year is also a setback to PGA Tour officials trying to build momentum for its new FedExCup competition.

The tour revamped its schedule to feature a points race that starts at Mercedes-Benz Championship and concludes with four "playoff" tournaments at the end of the season, with the winner getting euro7.6 million ($10 million) in deferred compensation. It has been promoting the FedExCup as the "new era in golf" in print and TV advertising the last month.

The season starts Thursday without two of the tour's most popular players — Woods and Masters champion Phil Mickelson, who has not played at Kapalua since 2001. Ernie Els and Retief Goosen did not win on the PGA Tour last year, meaning the field at Kapalua will have only one major champion from '06 — Australian Geoff Ogilvy — and only eight of the top 20 players in the world.

Woods will not have played on the PGA Tour for nearly four months when he returns at the Buick Invitational. His last tour event was the American Express Championship outside London, where he won by eight shots for his eighth victory of the year. *AP*

Zito inks richest pitcher's purse with Giants

SAN FRANCISCO—THE SAN FRANcisco Giants confirmed Friday that left-handed pitcher Barry Zito will be staying in the Bay Area after inking a seven-year contract.

Zito, who spent the first seven seasons of his career with the Oakland Athletics, is in his prime at 28 years old and won the American League Cy Young Award in 2002, when he went 23-5 with a 2.75 ERA for the Athletics.

Financial terms were not disclosed, but the San Francisco Chronicle on Thursday reported the deal was worth $126 million.

That would be the largest contract in baseball history for a pitcher. The deal also includes a club option for an eighth year.

"When you have an opportunity to acquire a pitcher of Barry's caliber, you have to exhaust every effort to get him on your club," San Francisco general manager Brian Sabean said.

Zito is the fourth player this offseason to sign for at least $100 million, joining Alfonso Soriano, Vernon Wells and Carlos Lee.

Soriano inked an eight-year, $136 million deal with the Chicago Cubs, Wells signed with Toronto for $136 million over seven years and Lee signed for six years $100 million with Houston.

"Barry's signing is as big a moment in recent Giants history as when we signed Barry Bonds for the first time back in 1992," said Giants president Peter Magowan. "Barry is at the same point in his career now as Bonds was back then - an established major leaguer with a rigorous work ethic entering the prime of his career.

ZITO: $126-million arm AP

"In addition to his skills as a pitcher, we were particularly impressed with his charisma, leadership skills, especially given our young pitching staff."

Landing Zito is a major move for the Giants, who were in desperate need of an ace after Jason Schmidt signed a three-year, $47 million contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers. *AFP*

'Scud' keys Hopman upset

MELBOURNE—HOSTS AUSTRALIA CAUSED an upset in the opening match of the Hopman Cup in Perth on Saturday by beating top seeds Russia courtesy of singles wins by Alicia Molik and Mark Philippoussis.

The Australian duo, both looking to return to higher rankings after injury and poor form, enjoyed emphatic wins in the mixed team event with Molik beating world number six Nadia Petrova in three sets and Philippoussis seeing off Dmitry Tursunov in two.

Molik, who rose to a career-high world number eight in early 2005 before a debilitating ear infection saw her slip to a 2006 year-end ranking of 163, gave the hosts the perfect launch pad with a 6-2 2-6 6-2 win over Petrova.

The 25-year-old, who came through the playoffs last week to earn a wildcard to the Australian Open, surged to a 3-0 lead in the first set before the Russian levelled the breaks at 3-2.

But another break, courtesy of a line call referred to Hawkeye, helped Molik seal the set 6-2. She then went 2-0 up in the second before Petrova reeled off six games in a row to level the match. *Reuters*

Admitted addict Tyson released

PHOENIX—MIKE TYSON WAS released from jail without bond on a felony drug possession charge Friday after an early morning arrest in which Buckeye police said they found two bags of white powder in his back pocket.

"He admitted to using today and stated he is an addict and has a problem," according to a police probable cause statement filed in Maricopa County Superior Court. "Mike admitted to possessing bags of cocaine and said he uses any time he can get his hands on it."

Tyson was arrested early Friday, after nearly ramming a police SUV, on suspicion of driving under the influence and possession of cocaine when police stopped him shortly after he left a nightclub in Scottsdale, Arizona. According to the report, an officer saw Tyson trying to wipe a white powder off the console of his BMW as he approached.

In court Friday morning, the former heavyweight champ was dressed in an oversized golf shirt, baggy jeans and tennis shoes and said nothing. *AP*

Hingis top seed in Australian hardcourt event

GOLD COAST, AUSTRALIA—FORMER world number one Martina Hingis will return to the place where she launched her successful comeback when she opens play Sunday at the Australian Women's Hardcourt tennis championships.

Twelve months ago, the 26-year-old Swiss Miss entered this tournament after a three-year break from the sport with a nominal world ranking of 9,999.

A year on, the five-time Grand Slam winner is firmly ensconced in the top 10 and is the number one seed for the first tournament of the Australian summer.

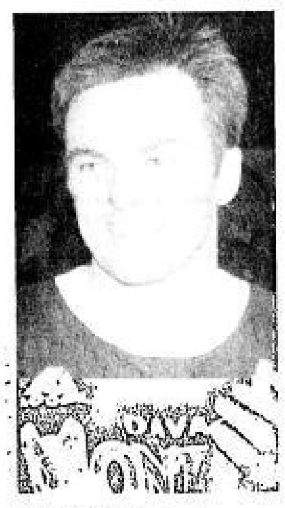
She is also celebrating her recent engagement to Czech player Radek Stepanek, which she formally announced to the Australian media on Friday.

Hingis, said to be too small to compete with the game's new breed of power hitters when she launched her comeback, proved her doubters wrong in 2006, making up for a lack of power with natural guile and intelligent court craft.

She performed well at all four Grand Slams and won two WTA titles—the Italian Open in May and the Kolkata Open in September.

She opens her campaign on Sunday at the Royal Pines Resort against Austrian world number 49 Sybille Bammer. *AFP*

PBL: Bittersweet departures, stirring victories



COMPTON: Last game

By Jasmine W. Payo

BITTERSWEET DEPARTURES AND STIRRING comebacks marked this year's PBL run.

Welcoat Paints, one of the most successful teams in the amateur ranks, bid farewell to the league last June.

A perennial finalist, Welcoat moved on to the pro league after capturing six championships in 10 years.

Taking over Welcoat's franchise was Henkel Sista, a brand of water-based sealant.

"The team they left behind is also strong," PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad said of Henkel Sista, the league leader in the current Silver Cup. "We lost the traditional names synonymous to winning championships. But it opened more opportunities for more teams."

Welcoat hoped for a grand exit, but could only muster a third-place finish in the season-ending Unity Cup.

In another heartfelt farewell, Montaña guard Alex Compton played his last game in the league, which honored him with a Role Model Award.

The special tribute cited the genial American "for being a gentleman on the court and a great individual off the court."

"Even if my basketball career here has ended, I've experienced and learned a lot in the Philippines," a teary-eyed Compton said in Filipino after his impressive four-year stint in the league.

But the PBL found hope with the emergence of new teams and young stars.

In a championship run that no one predicted, Harbour Centre bagged the Unity Cup crown to become the lowest-seeded team to win the PBL title.

The Port Masters, bannered by LA Tenorio and Joseph Yeo, outclassed the Toyota Otis Sparks in a classic Finals series, 3-2.

It was a steep climb to the top for the sixth-seeded Port Masters, who were playing in only their third conference.

Before outlasting the top-ranked Toyota Otis, the young crew overcame Granny Goose's twice-to-beat advantage in the quarterfinals and knocked out powerhouse Montaña in the best-of-five semifinal series.

Similarly staging a phenomenal comeback, Magnolia overcame a 0-2 deficit in the Finals series to capture the Heroes Cup title in February.

Finals Most Valuable Player Kelly Williams and Arwind Santos delivered the clutch plays for the Wizards, who stunned Rain or Shine in a best-of-five encounter.

So falls short, but Sadorra gains IM norm

Final standings:

7.5 points—GM Zhang Pengxiang (China); 7.0—GM Zhang Zhong (China), GM Wang Hao (China); 6.5—GM Li Shilong (China), GM Ni Hua (China), GM Zhao Jun (China), Li Chao (China) GM Le Quang Liem (Vietnam), GM Susanto Megaranto (Indonesia); 6.0—**IM Wesley So (RP), FM Julio Sadorra (RP)**

Other Filipino bets:

5.5—IM Enrique Paciencia; 5.0—IM Luis Chiong IV, FM Roderick Nava; 4.5—FM John Paul Gomez, IM Ronald Dableo, IM Chito Garma, FM Anthony Makinano; 3.0—Dr. Alfredo Paez

FILIPINO JULIO SADORRA EARNED AN International Master (IM) norm at the close of the 2006 Singapore Masters chess tournament at the Asean Chess Academy in Singapore.

The Cavite-born but Singapore-based Sadorra (Elo 2374) triumphed over Indonesian International Masters Tirto (2429) and Salor Sitanggang (2423) in the last two rounds to finish with 6.0 points.

Wesley So, however, faltered in his bid for a second Grandmaster norm.

The 13-year-old whiz kid needed to score 6.5 points, but fell to Chinese GM Li Shilong (2524) in the eighth round late Friday, then settled for a draw with Vietnamese IM Bui Vinh (2485) in the final round yesterday to finish tied with Sadorra.

As the hottest Filipino chess player, So looked on track in his GM bid with 5.5 points going into the last two rounds.

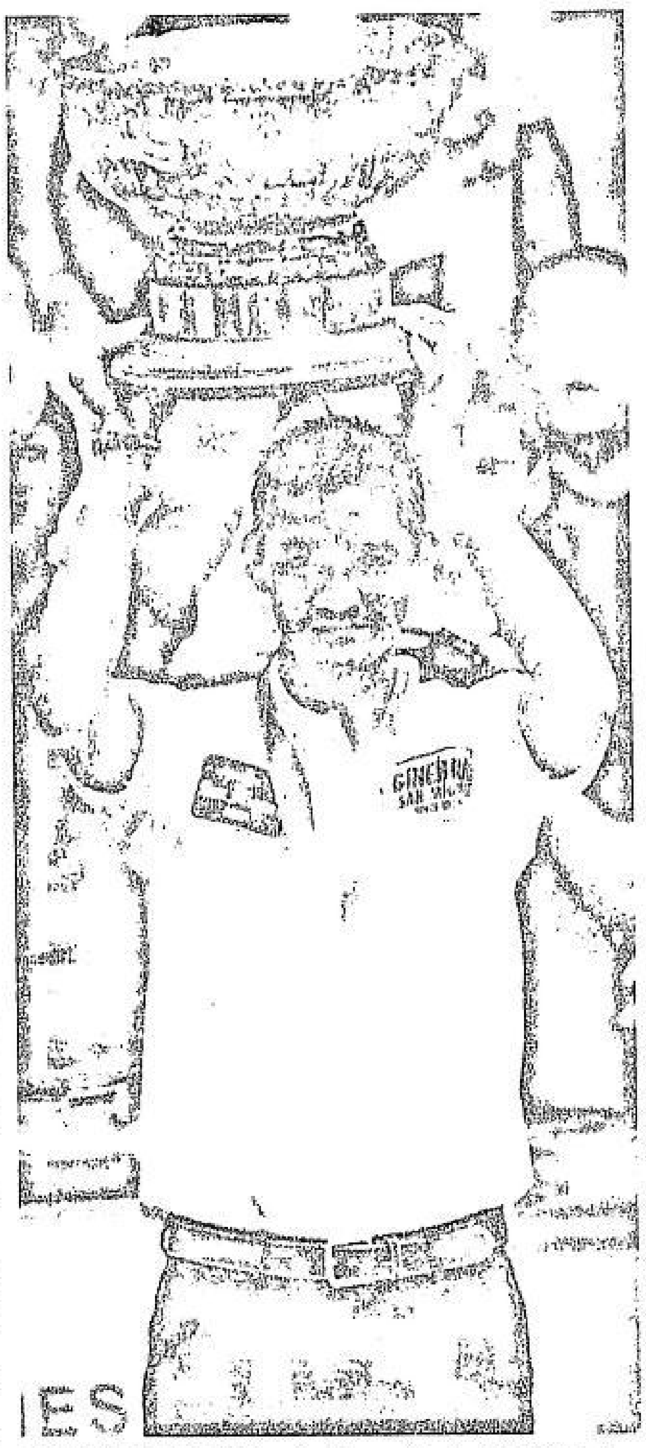
So (2411), the youngest national champion, earned his first GM norm last month in Badwiesee, Germany.

In the Challengers section, lone Filipino entry Lyndon Sombilon of Davao City settled for 5.5 points after dropping his final match against Zhang Jing of China.

GM Zhang Pengxiang (2636) bagged the crown in the Open section with 7.5 points.

Pengxiang beat compatriot GM Li Shilong with the black pieces to claim the $4,000 grand prize.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor



GRANDEST PRIZE: Ronnie Alcano lifts the World Pool Championship cup at the PICC. RODEL ROTONI

BILLIARDS YEARENDER

RP cue masters rule the world

By Inquirer Sports Staff and Marlon Bernardino, *Contributor*

EVEN WITH A GALAXY OF POOL STARS AT ITS disposal, the Philippines could find year 2006 hard to top.

With Ronnie Alcano announcing his arrival as a global force in the game with a title romp in the World Pool Championship, Filipinos were at the forefront of almost every big international event in the year about to pass.

Antonio Gabica won the 9-ball gold and the 8-ball silver medal in the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, and the Philippines' foremost forces—Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante—continued to cash in in money-rich tournaments around the world.

Veterans Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat and Ramil Gallego won legs in the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour to join the fray as the Philippines completed its ascent as the world's top pool power—hands down.

Alcano's achievement

But none of those conquests could come close to the achievement of Alcano, who came from literally the tail of the pack to defeat the methodical German Ralf Souquet, 17-11, in a World Pool finals watched by a throng of his countrymen at the Philippine International Convention Center.

After winning just one match in the classification phase, Alcano bundled out Reyes—the brightest and most loved local hope—in the second round before taking out Chinese Taipei's Wu Chia-ching, the defending champion, in the quarterfinals.

It was a victory that fanned the fire—again—of the country's passion for what used to be known as a betting man's sport, and it gave the Philippines its third world champion after Reyes (1999 in Cardiff, Wales) and Alex Pagulayan, the 2004 winner in Kaohsiung.

'Best player that ever lived'

In August, Reyes and Bustamante topped the inaugural World Cup of Pool doubles by demolishing the tandem of Earl "The Pearl" Strickland and Rodney "Rocket" Morris of the United States, 13-5, in the finals to pocket the top prize of $60,000 in South Wales, Britain.

Two weeks later, Bata, regarded by his peers as the "best player that ever lived," topped the International Pool Tour World Open 8-Ball Championship to claim the $500,000 prize, the richest purse in billiards history.

At the US Open in September, Luat lost to American John Schmidt in the final round to settle for runner-up honors and the $15,000 purse. He also placed second in the Derby City 9-Ball, setbacks that came before he bagged the Kaohsiung leg of the 2006 SMB Asian Tour.

The Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh stops went to Reyes while the Bangkok leg was won by Gallego.

Dangerous players

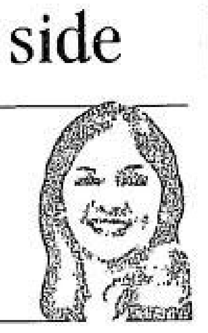
Jeffrey de Luna, meanwhile, sustained his rise, bagging the 9-ball silver behind Gabica after losing, 7-11, in the gold medal match in the Doha Asiad.

There were others—Marlon Manalo, Gandy Valle, Pagulayan and Dennis Orcollo—who failed to win major titles but are still regarded as dangerous players in the circuit.

Certainly, with the abundance of such talents, there's no way to look but up for RP pool next year.

Pacquiao's superstitious side

In Huddle



Beth Celis

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THAT SOMEONE as highly physical as Manny Pacquiao could be very spiritual too.

It was therefore a big revelation when this aspect of Pacman's nature became evident in a 15-minute chat during an exclusive dinner hosted by Solar Sports brothers William and Wilson Tieng at the Hyatt Hotel last Thursday.

* * *

Actually, I was only eager to hear the truth straight from the horse's mouth. It's about a superstitious practice that Pacquiao claims he needs to follow.

After my last column came out, a colleague texted to inform me that Manny flew to Manila on Tuesday to rehearse for his concert. That meant he had slept for only three straight nights in his new house in Gen. Santos City. The superstition in question requires that the dweller of a new house sleep there for five straight nights to ensure that he and his family do not attract bad luck.

Was he able to sleep there for five nights? I also asked the boxing icon if there's really such a superstition.

* * *

Manny, who had approached our table on the request of Reli de Leon, a staff member in the Manny Pacquiao Promotions, answered yes to both queries.

"I flew to Manila on Dec. 21, after I had completed the required five straight nights," Pacquiao said in Filipino. "I wouldn't dare risk ignoring this practice because an uncle had died in the past because he failed to observe the same superstition to the letter."

Reli remarked that Pacman was indeed very superstitious. And religious, too.

He always preached to his staff, according to Reli, the merit of good versus evil.

I myself, got a taste of this that evening, as Manny recalled that day he was scheduled to fight Erik "El Terrible" Morales for the third and final time.

* * *

"I was sick that day and really felt weak. I was running a 39-degree fever and my body was trying to ward off the onslaught of a respiratory infection. Because of my condition, I knew that there was every possibility that I could lose. But I couldn't ask for a postponement, so I prayed fervently before the fight.

"*Sabi ko sa Kanya*, 'Lord, *ikaw na ang bahala sa akin* (take good care of me),' But even as I said this, I felt drained of energy."

Inside the ring, while dancing in the first round, Manny said he was trying to get a feel of his condition.

"*Yung unang suntok, yung kaliwa ko, gulat na gulat ako. Ang lakas!* To this day, hindi ko *ma*-explain how I got that energy, that power. I can only ascribe it to Him, through my prayer."

* * *

Manny believes his prayers are being answered because he has learned the right way to do it.

"*Meron d'yan nagdarasal nga nang mataimtim*, straight from the heart, *kaso lang, hinihintay nilang ibigay ang hinihingi nila. Yung iba naman, nagdarasal nga pero sa bibig lang, wala sa puso. Yung pangatlo, gaya ko, nagdarasal nang mataimtim*, from the bottom of my heart, *at hindi naghihintay na dumating ang hiniling. Kung dumating, magpasalamat ako nang mataimtim, kung hindi naman, okey lang*."

A devotee of the Black Nazarene, Manny had the shorts he wore in his last fight blessed by the priests at the Quiapo Church before it was brought to the United States.

He said he has walked His path following an illuminating dream he had several years ago.

* * *

"During that time *kasi, parang naliligaw na ang landas ko, nakalimot na ko sa kanya*. One night, I dreamed that I was inside a rain forest. It was very dark, eerie, I was by myself. Suddenly a very brilliant ray of light filtered through the trees and bathed me. Then I heard a booming voice. *Sabi niya, 'Anak, bakit lumayo ka sa akin?'* When I woke up, I was crying and sweating profusely. My pillow, my bed was wet with tears. I was shivering."

Since that profound experience, Manny said he has walked with the Lord. He said he hopes everybody prays the way he does so that their prayers would be answered too.

For the new year 2007, Manny has no personal wish.

"*Ang wish at dasal ko ay para sa lahat. Sana bumuti ang buhay ng lahat, sana wala nang maghirap*," he said.

UFC 66
LIDDELL vs ORTIZ 2
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IT HAS BEEN NEARLY TWO YEARS SINCE CHUCK "THE ICEMAN" LIDDELL AND TITO "HUNTINGTON BEACH BAD BOY ORTIZ" FACED EACH OTHER ON THE OCTAGON RING. NOW, UFC'S BIGGEST SUPERSTARS ARE SET TO MAKE HISTORY ONCE MORE AS LIDDELL (19-3-0) TRIES TO DEFEND HIS UFC LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP AGAINST HIS FORMER TRAINING PARTNER AND FRIEND ORTIZ (16-4-0) IN A NO-HOLDS BARRED, HEATED MATCH-UP OF THE YEAR.
ONE LONGSTANDING
ONE CHAMPION
ONE EXPLOSIVE COMBAT

MILO JUNIOR CUP TENNIS

Fiery Japanese put away 3 titles

JAPANESE HIROKI TSUNEMATSU CARVED OUT A GRITTY 4-6, 7-6, 10-3 VICTORY over compatriot Shohei Osaki yesterday to capture the boys' 16-under crown at the close of the Milo Junior Tennis Cup at the Philam Homes Tennis Club in Quezon City.

Tsunematsu, one of eight players representing Hyogo Tennis Club of Japan, shared the limelight with teammate Arisa Murakami who captured the girls' 16-under championship at the expense of another Japanese, Ryoko Sanada, 6-4, 6-1.

In a third all-Japan title showdown, Jun Onishi downed Iori Uehara, 6-4, 6-3, to bag the boys' 14-under title in the yearender Milo tournament organized by CTW, supported by Prince tennis equipment and sanctioned by the Philippine Tennis Association.

Underscoring the dominance of the visitors, Tsunematsu and Osaki will also dispute the boys' 18-under diadem.

But the multi-bracket international championships was definitely not an all-Japanese show.

Vince Mark Tabotabo of Tuburan, Cebu, upset top seed Mark Escares, 7-6, 6-2, to put away the unisex 10-under crown while Dheo Talatayod, a member of the Philippine age-group squad that campaigned recently in Malaysia, outlasted Cebu City's Jacob Lagman, 6-4, 2-6, 14-12, to win the boys' 12-under diadem.

Marian Capadocia of Antique outduelled Crizabelle Paulino of Olongapo City, 6-4, 4-6, 10-7, to top the girls' 12-under division.

Milo sports executive Pat Goc-ong, CTW tennis director Jovy Mamawal and JuntaPhil's Nana Barcelona awarded the trophies and medals to the winners.

Real Spicy puts unbeaten streak on line

By Musong R. Castillo

TOP HORSE REAL SPICY WILL shoot for all the marbles when he sets out as the favorite in the Philracom Classic Open today at Santa Ana Park in Makati City.

The handsome charger puts an undefeated season and a 12-race winning streak on the line against an all-comers' field—including rivals that denied him last year—when the season-ending P3-million race is flagged off at 3:45 p.m.

There's also another P1.8 million in prize money to be won, which could jack up the super horse's season total past the P5 million mark and to close to P10 million for his career.

And more importantly, a win in the race slated over 2,050 meters would validate Real Spicy's lock on the prestigious Horse of the Year award.

"I feel like a father awaiting the birth of a child," owner Hermie Esguerra told the INQUIRER on the eve of the big race. "I always get nervous before each (big) race."

Louie D. Balboa, the young and courageous rider, will steer the offspring of Real Quiet out of Spicy Tale, in place of Jessie B. Guce, as they slug it out with seven others, including defending champion Wild Orchid, the top-caliber import who was the last to deal Real Spicy a defeat.

Now his stablemate, Wild Orchid ruled this race last year, shattering the track record at the San Lazaro Leisure Park with a time of 2 minutes and 4.8 seconds over 2,000 meters.

And it was the loss that got Real Spicy going, for he has not lost since returning to action in late February.

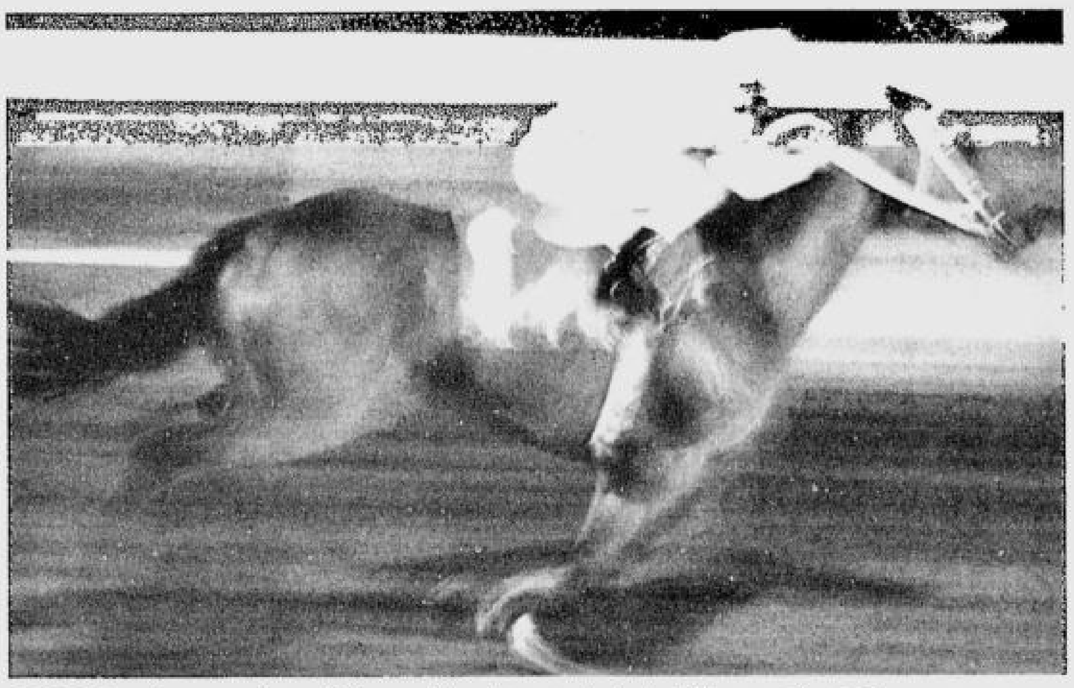
Among his race victories are the First Gentleman's Silver Cup, the Gran Copa de Manila, the Philtobo Classic and the Presidential Gold Cup.

Empire King, the former Gold Cup winner who will be skippered by John Cordero, is again tipped as the biggest threat together with coupled imports Ever Mine Now and La Tienne, to be handled by Jonathan Hernandez and Efren Salvador, respectively.

Danseuse is a darkhorse. The five-year-old chestnut mare will be piloted by Patti Dilema.

Val Dilema rides Wild Orchid, who is battling a slight rear leg problems of late.

Fairy Queen, Empire King's couple, will be handled by Lord Santos, while Glory and Honour, with veteran Manolito Daquis, rounds out the field.



REAL Spicy tries to cap a bountiful year with a victory today in the Philracom Classic Cup. ROGER MARGALLO

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Ginja (9), Lovely Tara/Yo Tero (8), Princess Dancer (5), Tanging Ikaw (4), Papillon/Seven Lakas (10)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Lyanjonik (10), Windsong (5), Royal Halo (1), Tigerific (4), Leica N'Raven (3)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Dixie The Younger (9), Key Element (3), Ayan Na Ko (4), Triple Threat (7), Full Of Fury (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Prince Valiant (9), Rivaldo (10), Terry Toon (11), Desert Breeze (12), Sir Benjo (3)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—One Man's Soul (1), Sir Luis (6), Dynamic Duo (3), Sugar Daddy (2)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Dato's Pride (4), Money Man (10), At All Cost (11), Iron Tower (9), Lord Brian (12)
Race 7—(Tri)—Wild Orchid/Real Spicy (4), Ever Mine Now/La Tienne (3), Empire King/Fairy Queen (3)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Friendly Fire (5), Hok Kee Hok (6), St. Germain (8), Chicklet (7), Best Strike (10)
Race 9—(Qrt/Tri)—Marque (4), Master King (7), Luxardo (2), Badge Of Honour/Cutting Edge (5)
Race 10—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Golden Touch (6), Kiwi Rose (1), Blitzkrieg (3), Head Turner (14), Stradivarius (8)
Race 11—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Circulation/Dualargo (7), Bilinggaling (2), Itza Lemon (6), Isle Of Fire (3), Rain Dancer (5)
Race 12—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Slew Dancer (5), Pirouette (6), Mainstay (11), Dondon's Entry (2), Galaxy Wars (3)
Race 13—(Super 6/Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Detective Daryll (2), Royal Rose (13), Kawiliwili (3), American Beauty (12), Prophet (4), Noor (7)

Bill Shaw golf comes off the wraps Jan. 25

THE BILL SHAW MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC, the much-awaited tournament held in honor of Wack Wack Golf and Country Club founder William J. Shaw, tees off Jan. 25 to 27 at the Mandaluyong course.

The organizing committee, headed by club president Benjamin S. Abalos and sports and games committee chair Pablo Soon, are preparing the staging of the three-day tournament, now on its 18th edition and open to the first 250 two-man teams—a club member and a guest partner with a certified handicap index.

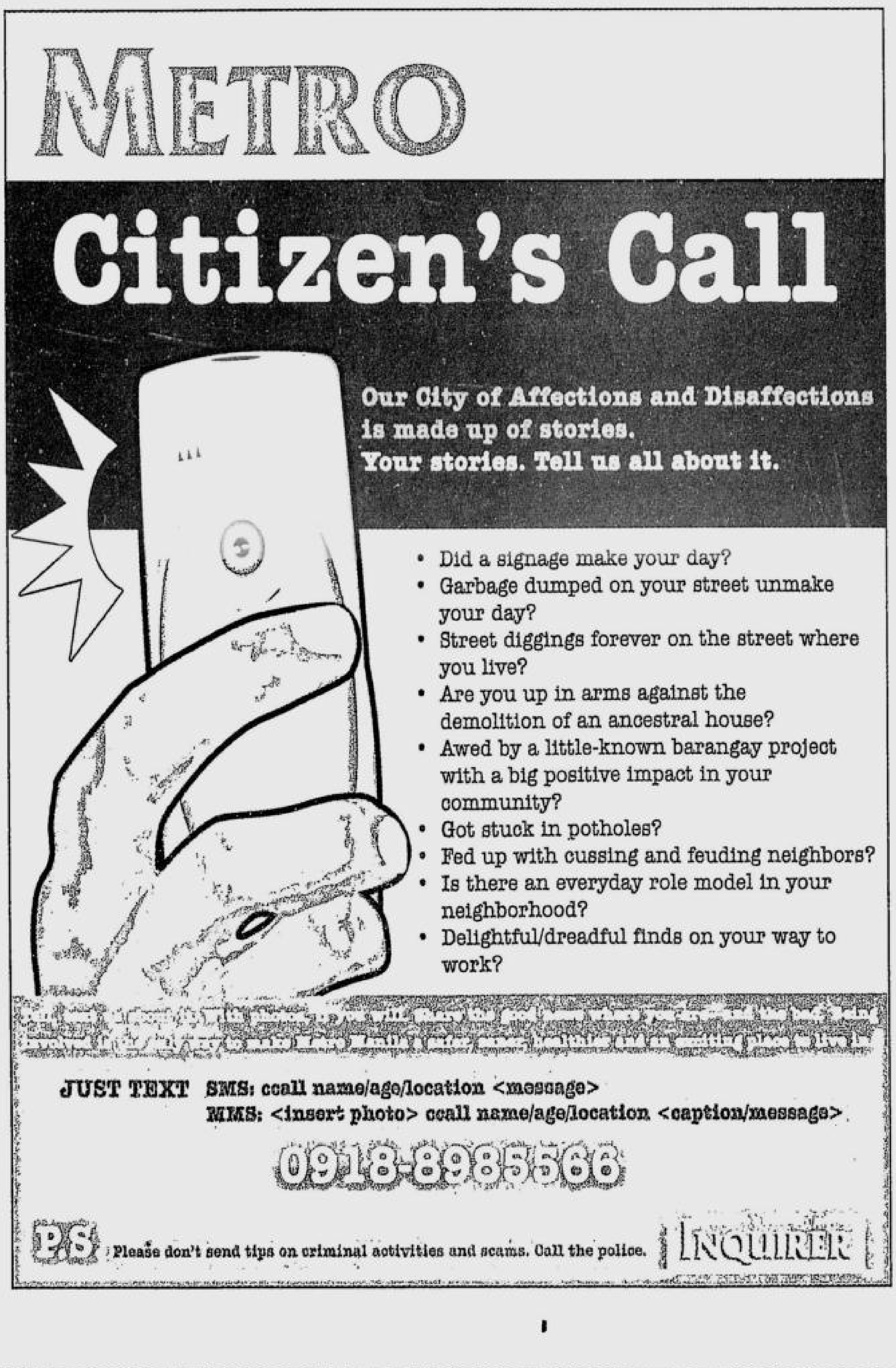
Members' guests who have certified handicap indices issued either by the Information Professionals Inc. or the National Golf Association of the Philippines, can vie in the tournament. Deadline for the submission of entries is Jan. 21.

Wack Wack lady players may also compete but their handicaps will be adjusted or converted accordingly because they will use the men's blue tees. Each lady will be allowed to have a male partner, provided he is not a member of the club.

Participating teams will be classified into four groups, namely, Groups I, II, III and seniors. The handicap index of each team will be determined by dividing by two the sum of the 50 percent of the aggregate and scramble handicaps combined. The team with the lowest net score wins.

The entry fee is P7,000, inclusive of a pair of golf shoes and a P2,000 worth of gift certificates.

Guests can play their free practice round on any of these dates: Jan. 3, 4, 15, 22 and 29.



METRO

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- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
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- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

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INQUIRER

Santillan moves on to regain OPBF crown for third time

FORMER ORIENTAL AND PACIFIC BOXING Federation (OPBF) welterweight champion Rev Santillan figures in a tune-up bout against Japanese Shana Kisaragi on Feb. 12 at the Archaic Hall in Amagasaki, Japan, before the planned crack at his old title.

Santillan had lost the OPBF title by split decision against Hiroshi Yamaguchi last April 20 in Tokyo.

An immediate Santillan-Yamaguchi rematch was being worked out, but the Japanese opted to defend his title once before facing the very durable Santillan.

To keep busy, Santillan will fight Kisaragi, a 25-year-old neophyte from Osaka who holds a 5-3-3 win-loss-draw record with 2 KOs.

Santillan (22-3-1, 16 KOs), of Iloilo City, first won the OPBF title via a split decision over South Korean Suk Hyun-yun in 2001, defended it three times, before losing the title in a disputed fashion to Hiroshi Watanabe in late 2002.

SANTILLAN

He regained the title from Watanabe two years later, defended it once, before losing the crown once again to another Japanese, Kazuhiko Hidaka, in 2005 on a fourth-round knockout defeat.

In the rematch, Santillan stopped Hidaka in the eighth round of what was billed as "OPBF Fight of the Year" for 2005, before bowing to Yamaguchi in his last fight. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Coach E five tops FBL caging

THE COACH E SQUAD DOWNED ST. MARY'S College, 35-17, to win the Future Basketball League (FBL) 8-10 division title at the Blue Eagle Gym recently.

Coach E, mentored by Xavier Nuñag and Hakim Gandarosa, was the first club team to win the championship in the school-dominated tournament.

Nuñag's squad is made up of Nico Mercado, Jeremiah Vizmonte, Sandro Puno, Lorenzo Manaois, Enzo Abastillas, Javi de Guzman, Gabsy Francisco, Coco Ledesma, Rapa Limpingco, Dan Azariah Oaman, Dan Hananiah Oaman, Miguel Romero, Colin Salao, Santiago Salas, Anton Sison and Vince Soliven.

The players are all products of the Coach E school's personalized and scientific basketball training.

The clinic will be offered anew starting Jan. 17 at clubsixfifty in Libis, Quezon City, The Zone in Makati, Club Malarayat in Lipa City, San Beda College in Alabang and Xavier School.

For inquiries, log on to iba_phil@yahoo.com or www.ibaphil.net.

SJC Int'l Derby stakes P6M

THE MANAGEMENT OF SAN JUAN COLISEUM announced yesterday that P6 million awaits the champions in the upcoming SJC International 8-Cock Derby slated Jan. 22, 24 and 26 and sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. The guaranteed prize was raised following positive feedback from local and international participants, said pit manager Pete Rivera. "We can safely say that at least 100 cockers will join," Rivera said. All participants automatically become cohosts, entitling them to 50 percent of derby proceeds. This same format was used in SJC's first international derby, which drew 115 entries. Meanwhile, Totoy Haruta topped the first Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 5-Cock Derby last Thursday, after his Rainier entry posted 4.5 points. Up next is the SJC Cockers Club 4-cock derby on Jan. 8.

SPORTSWATCH

'Breaker' 4-cocker slated

THE SHOWDOWN FEATURING METRO MANILA'S biggest derby cockers shift to the Las Piñas Coliseum on Jan. 4 with the holding of the P500,000 Concrete Breaker 4-Cock Derby. Derby veteran and host Emil Chua said the entry fee is P11,000. Chua confirmed the participation of Lito Orillaza, Gerry Ramos, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Butchoy Olano, Eddie Ison, William Co, Sam Mendoza, Renato Shio, R. Pineda, Baldo Perez, RC Sayaman, Bobby Doromal, Jenjen Arayata, Boy Marzo, among others. Entries must be submitted on Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910. Meanwhile, the first 20 winners in LPC's regular hackfights will receive a P1,000 bonus each, said coliseum manager Alex Tobias.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Website: www.inq7money.net

Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor **Margie Quimpo-Espino**

Text us your feedback: inquirer biz name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) **E-mail:** business@inquirer.com.ph

IN THIS ISSUE

- **All's well in the food** and drinks arena /B2
- **Cutting costs not enough,** creating demand is /B4

PO2 JUEVES SALTIN is considered one of the best AFPSLAI entrepreneurs for making his anthurium trade blossom.

Policeman takes time to raise the flowers

Man in uniform augments pay with money from anthuriums

Text & photo by Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

KAPANGAN, Benguet—A policeman from this mountain town holds his colleagues in awe.

No, not because of his heroic acts in the call of duty. But because he successfully raises shiny red and heart-shaped flowers called anthuriums.

Juggling responsibilities

PO2 Jueves Saltin of Barangay Paykek juggles his time between his uniform's call of duty and tending his anthurium farm.

Saltin started raising anthuriums as a sideline in 2003 and the modest income from his garden proved that one need not be a florist nor be with a green thumb to become a successful anthurium farmer.

Today, Saltin, 31, earns P50 per dozen of anthuriums. And with harvest of 100 to 120 dozens a month, his salary as a policeman has been augmented.

His anthuriums are exclusively brought to the flower stalls on Dimasalang Street near the Dangwa Tranco station in Manila.

Saltin, who has a three-month-old son with wife Gemma, joined the Philippine. National Police in September 1996 after he quit an education course at Gov. Bado Dangwa Agro-Industrial School in Barangay Balakbak here.

He was assigned to the Cordillera police's regional mobile group and sent to Buguias and Kibungan towns in Benguet, and Bauko town in Mt. Province.

He was detailed with the PNP here in 2003 after he was promoted to Police Officer 2. It was a homecoming for him since he was born in Barangay Taba-ao here.

He got interested in anthuriums after he attending an anthurium raising seminar given by the Department of Agriculture to the town's peace and order council members.

He also saw how anthuriums were raised in seven sub-villages (sitio) of the town that served as pilot areas. These sub-villages—Tawang in Barangay Beling Belis, Liteng and Padangan in Barangay Sagubo, Laoangan and Copyas in Barangay Gaddang and Toplac and Tadayan in Barangay Pudong—were once the hotbed of marijuana farms.

AFPSLAI loan

He then applied for a loan of P70,000 from the Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AFPSLAI) whose corporate mission is to promote responsible loan management among soldiers and policemen.

Saltin used his borrowed capital to buy 3,000 anthurium seedlings and planted them on a 400-sqm lot in Barangay Paykek here owned by his father-in-law.

Now, the lot is home to 2,500 anthurium plants and Saltin is about to expand his farm to another 400 sqm lot in the same village.

On Dec. 1, Saltin was named the PNP's most outstanding member and entrepreneur of the year by top AFPSLAI officials in Camp Aguinaldo.

He topped a field of 13 nominees nationwide and emerged winner when the five finalists were chosen. He received a cash prize of P40,000.

The other awardees were SPO2 Eduardo Maglasay of Zamboanga del Sur (buy and sell of agriculture products), SPO4 Francisco Tobio of Ormoc City (production and retail of coconut wine), SPO1 Abdullah Muhmin of Zamboanga City (fishery and beach resort) and Sgt. Llidegardo Sayde of Catarman, Northern Samar (eatery).

Saltin says anthurium-raising is a very fulfilling source of additional income. It does not need a big capital to start with, the flowers grow easily and they do not require chemical sprays and commercial fertilizers to grow robust.

"All you need is a little compost of dried leaves and rice stalks and the anthuriums would not complain," he says.

Easy to harvest

He says a farm hand would suffice since the flowers are easy to harvest and transport, compared to vegetables that are usually heavy and dependent on costly farm inputs.

"You don't also have to worry about pests as long as your garden has a net," he says.

But the most important, he says, is that there is a steady and strong demand for anthuriums in the market.

"If one has a wide farm, he could earn triple what the regular government employee earns," he says.

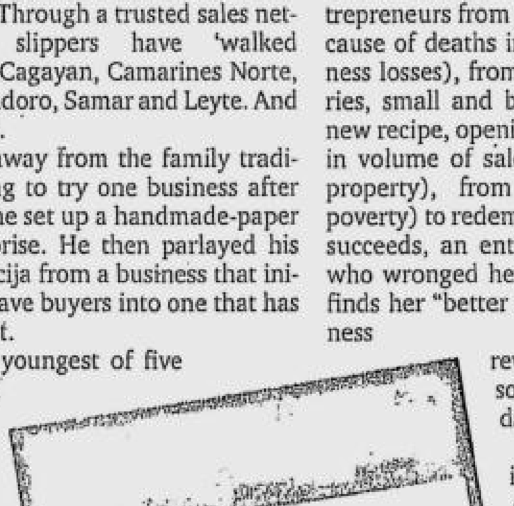
For poverty-stricken lives looking for a ray of sunshine

By Edna Flor M. de los Santos
Contributor

"ED AND VER ARE A GOOD-LOOKING couple, happy together at work, at home and at leisure. Through a trusted sales network, their slippers have 'walked far'—reaching Cagayan, Camarines Norte, Occidental Mindoro, Samar and Leyte. And even Shoemart.

"Jun broke away from the family tradition of teaching to try one business after another, until he set up a handmade-paper making enterprise. He then parlayed his Papel Nueba Ecija from a business that initially did not have buyers into one that has begun to export.

"Luz is the youngest of five children born to a copra worker and a housewife in Sorsogon. Her life became harder when she lost her mother at age 12. Today, Luz is a picture of contentment. Her family lives a good life."



A SOURCE of inspiration for entrepreneurs

These are not the protagonists of a best-selling fiction. They are real people, four of the "Dreamers, Doers, Risk-takers" featured in the "Micros that Roared!"—the third volume of articles on successful entrepreneurs published jointly by the Small Enterprises Research and Development Foundation, Inc (SERDEF) and the University of the Philippines Institute for Small Scale Industries (UP ISSI). Written in clear and simple language by writers of UP ISSI, the 190-page book captures the drama of 25 lives that battled all odds—abject poverty, lack of skills, family disapproval, personal tragedies—to craft decent lives for themselves and their families through micro businesses such as slipper-making, fish-trading, soap-making, native delicacies, peanuts, food-processing, to name a few. So successful is the narrative style that the reader gets personally involved in the ups and downs and the twists and turns of the fortunes of the featured personalities.

From pain to pain

The reader travels with the entrepreneurs from pain to pain (suffered because of deaths in the family, fire or business losses), from failed ventures to victories, small and big (such as discovery of new recipe, opening new markets, increase in volume of sales or acquisition of new property), from rejection (because of poverty) to redemption (when the business succeeds, an entrepreneur forgives those who wronged her, an arrogant fish trader finds her "better self" after suffering business reverses), and from zero resources to a taste of abundance.

Set mostly in impoverished circumstances and environment familiar to Filipino readers, from Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon, and spiced with vernacular terms, the stories deliver a theme that strikes home and lifts the spirit of every Filipino reader, rich or poor.

Power in hands

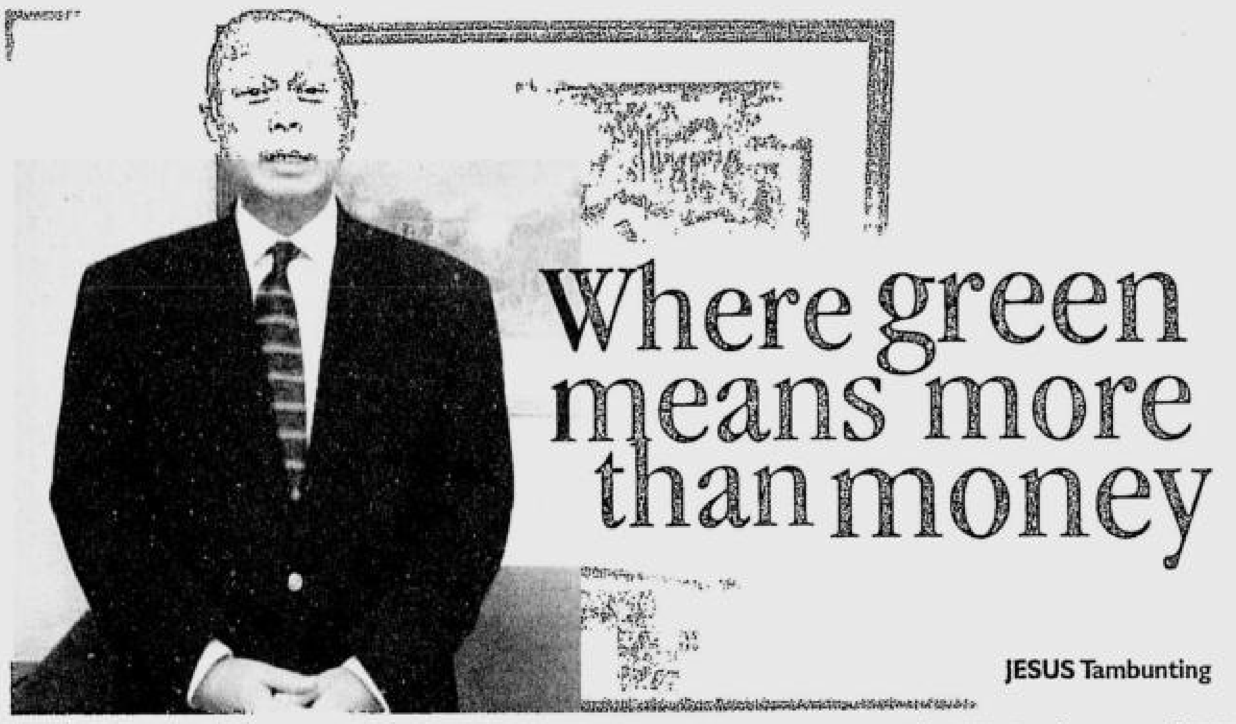
The book resonates with the strong message that there is power in our hands to transcend the limitations of the elements of our nature and nurture, provided we take responsibility for our lives and have the courage to break down the barriers that keep us from what we want to become.

For exemplifying these virtues, these entrepreneurs did not only earn profits but also won awards from microfinance and other support agencies.

"The Micros that Roared" is not about lions or tigers; not even about their cubs. It is about former "kittens"—little lives, powerless people, voiceless creatures—who later packed themselves with muscles and bones, and possibly with vocal chords that allow them to roar, worth their weight in human values, if not gold.

The reader cannot miss the values that

FOR/ B2



Where green means more than money

JESUS Tambunting

By Ed L. Santoalla
Contributor

GREEN IN THE 21ST CENTURY HAS come a long way from being just the color of money. It represents Mother Earth and the worldwide movement to conserve the finite natural resources of the planet and sustain its habitats from further destruction.

The movement has found its way into the corporate board rooms where adherents and their allies are now working to make the principles and standards of environmentalism a basis for business decision-making.

The trend towards corporate environmentalism has been validated in a recent survey of investment and commercial banking institutions worldwide conducted by the United Nations Environment Program and Salomon Inc. of New York.

The survey showed that 70 percent of respondents believe environmental issues have a significant impact on the operation of their business.

The survey, however, also found that a specific environmental criterion is less likely to be incorporated in the overall strategy on lending and investment. Although these institutions have taken steps to address the issue of environmental risk management, it has till now just scratched the surface.

Basis for decisions

Things, however, are beginning to change especially in Asia and the Pacific region where the Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP), a group of 70 development banks in 35 countries, is actively pushing environmentalism as a basis for decision-making in bank lending and investment in the region.

"We are not just pushing environmentalism as a condition for lending," according to former Philippine ambassador to the United Kingdom Jesus P. Tambunting, chair of ADFIAP. "For us, environmentalism is the basis by which to judge whether businesses will succeed or fail," he says.

ADFIAP is aiming for no less than the greening of the financial sector. "We have one goal: sustainable development. I believe strongly that progress must be environmentally viable for it to be sustainable, at the very least, and profitable at best," Tambunting stresses.

In 2005, ADFIAP partnered with the United Nations Environment Program Finance Initiative (UNEP/FI) to conduct a study to determine the state of sustainability in the finance practices of 19 development financing institutions (DFIs) in Asia and the Pacific. Respondents were members of ADFIAP, which positions itself as "the focal point of all development banks and other financial institutions engaged in financing sustainable development in Asia-Pacific."

Sustainability to grow

Survey results showed that ADFIAP members agree sustainability in the finance sector will grow in the next five years. About 69 percent of the members look at sustainability issues as a business risk while about 63 percent regard its relevance as a business opportunity.

As a follow-through to this initiative, ADFIAP tapped the Wuppertal Institute for Climate Change in Germany and the UK's Sustainability Research Institute at the University of Leeds-School of Earth and Environment to conduct studies on environmental performance monitoring and environmental rating standards in the region.

The initiatives form part of ADFIAP's "Greening of DFIs" Project, supported by a 346,446-euro grant from the European Union's Asia Pro-Eco Program. The ultimate goal of the "Greening of DFIs" project is to support sustainable development efforts of the banking and finance sector in Asia and the Pacific through development and implementation of environmental governance standards (EGS) for ADFIAP member-DFIs and other participating financial institutions.

The Wuppertal study focused on the internal application of an Environmental Performance Monitoring (EPM) program within DFIs' organizational structures. The EPM program provides tools to benchmark DFIs' environmental management policies and practices against best-industry standards. To be a truly green bank, DFIs have to be green from within.

As an external dimension, the University of Leeds' study looked into the feasibility of DFIs adopting uniform Environmental Rating Standards (ERS) for loan appraisal and project finance. The study, however, concluded that there is "lack of uniformity" in the current approaches of DFIs in environmental loan appraisals. "Combined with a severe lack of transparency," the study said it would be difficult to understand how banks can treat environmental risks using a set of 'one-size-fits-all" environmental rating standards. On the other hand, the study provided several tools European banks currently use to address environmental risks. These include: risk-adjusted pricing, monitoring, covenants, refusal of loan and portfolio optimization.

The results of both studies were presented during the March 2006 ADFIAP

WHERE GREEN/ B2

All's well in the food and drinks arena

Set up a funnel cake venture for ₱200,000

A FUNNEL Cake booth

TODAY'S FRANCHISING buzzword is fast-casual food—freshly cooked, no-fuss meals prepared in a compact work station and served in a casual setting.

Amie's Funnel Cake Factory is a two-year-old franchising upstart that is the brainchild of a young wife and mother.

Her aim is to give Filipinos the chance to savor a Pennsylvania Dutch specialty usually sold in amusement parks and country fairs in the US. Funnel Cakes are fried dough cakes. The original recipe comes from culinary tradition of good food often using farm produce like milk, cream and butter. Imagine freshly mixed batter made from eggs, milk, sugar and flour poured in a pitcher with a funnel-shaped mouth.

The batter is poured in boiling oil, swirled in circular motion or criss-crossing back and an 8-inch round cake is made and fried until golden brown. Toppings for the cake are then chosen.

After two years, Gina See, its owner, decided to go into franchising after gaining a following.

When she started in January 2005, she got inquiries but "I decided not to franchise until I see the results of my product and of course the profitability."

She opened an outlet at the Festival Filinvest Mall last July 2005. She was given a 12 sq.m. area with a seating capacity of 12.

See believes she has a good business because Filipinos like sweet offerings and anything that is fried.

"Profitability is high because margins are high and there is not much inventory needed," she says.

The franchising contract includes brand usage, training, manuals, uniforms, supplies, toppings, mixes, assistance on location and equipment (excluding marketing and booth/stall construction).

A franchise costs about P200,000.

For franchising inquiries email @jgfunnel@yahoo.com or call 6313183.

From burger place to hotel

SYDNEY Hotel

WHAT USED TO BE A DINING PLACE SERVING burgers and noodles to company employees is now a hotel in General Santos, the booming port city of South Cotabato in Mindanao.

Sydney Hotel is six stories high and strategically located in front of the city hall, near banks and business establishments.

With General Santos or Gensan now known as the booming city of Southern Mindanao, the big demand for hotel accommodation and venues hastened the transformation in 1995 of an international-class facility like Sydney Hotel.

The amenities at the hotel, which is partly owned by employees along with mother company San Andres Fishing Industries Inc., are a delight for business travelers, convention delegates and tourists.

The hotel has function rooms and restaurants and the rooms equipped with amenities.

For inquiries, please call 083-552-5479 to 81.

2006: A good year for coffee

LEADING COFFEE BRAND NESCAFÉ EXPERIENCED a momentous year this 2006, punctuated by the market's warm reception to its two new premium products and the relaunch of existing bestsellers. It also took a leading role in promoting sustainable agriculture in the country.

"The very positive reaction we got for our products and our programs from both the public and the coffee industry is a concrete encouragement for us to continue with our initiatives," says Bruno Olierhoek, Nestlé's business executive manager for the coffee business unit.

In January 2006, the company launched Nescafé First Pick, a limited edition coffee product made from coffee cherries handpicked by Filipino farmers during the beginning of the harvest season.

Then there was Nescafé Protect, a specially made coffee product that contains three times more antioxidant protection than green tea.

"We believe that Nescafé Protect has allowed us to raise awareness that coffee is not only an enjoyable beverage but also a healthy beverage that fits very well in a healthy diet and lifestyle," says Olierhoek. "In line with the ever-growing health trend we believe that Nescafé has a role to play in educating people about the link between coffee and health."

The new Nescafé Classic was given a fresh new taste and aroma, while Nescafé 3-in-1 was repackaged in a more attractive design.

The TVC, which started running last November, featured five of the biggest celebrities in the country including Sam Milby, Toni Gonzaga, Dennis Trillo, John Lloyd Cruz and Pia Guanio.

Nescafé 3-in-1 likewise continues to enjoy brisk sales because of the added convenience it affords to busy people on the go. "Its new packaging made it easier to spot on supermarket shelves where competition is strongest," says Olierhoek.

Nestlé last year celebrated the 20th anniversary of its satellite buying stations operation.

Its Nestlé Experimental and Demonstration Farm (NEDF) continues to train farmers on good coffee farming practices and provide them with high yielding coffee seedlings and organic fertilizer at cost price.

Another milestone in Nescafé's efforts to promote sustainable agriculture in the Philippines took place last November when it took the lead in presenting the 1st Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) Platform Philippines convention.

The conference drew the participation of the country's largest food companies, all pledging to advance sustainable agricultural practices in the Philippines.

Olierhoek is likewise optimistic about the growth of the coffee industry in the coming year.

"Coffee is a well established category and we can already foresee its growth to be in line with overall GDP growth and across the different channels," Olierhoek says.

Why are sales of spirits and wine going up in RP?

MENDOZA

DESPITE THE COUNTRY'S ALLEGED falling economic conditions, imported and expensive brands of wines and spirits continue to thrive in the Philippine market. The implementation of sin taxes this year did not seem to have harmed the industry on a large scale, either.

How can Filipinos afford buying pricey alcoholic beverages in the face of inflation?

Joey Mendoza, president and general manager of Maxxium Philippines, explains: "Filipinos see the value in imported brands. We tend to prioritize items according to consumer benefits and satisfaction that we get, the price comes secondary. This is true when it comes to basic necessities, say toothpaste, and certainly it applies also to products that do not fall under the category of basic necessities, like wines and spirits."

Maxxium Philippines is the number one distributor of imported spirits today. It is the local arm of Maxxium Worldwide that operates in more than 35 countries and has presence in 60 markets. Among the brands that Maxxium brings in the local market are Absolut Vodka, Remy Martin Cognac, Fundador Brandy, Macallan Scotch Whisky and Jim Beam Bourbon.

"Maxxium Worldwide believes in the potential of the Philippine market," says Mendoza. The company in fact invested another P100 million to put up Maxxium Philippines, just a year ago, in September of 2005."

Maxxium Philippines has registered sterling results in the short period that it has been doing business. Fundador, for one, has just been named as one of the 100 Most Powerful Brands in the Wines and Spirits Sector. "They owe this success to Filipinos," Mendoza reveals. "Fundador is the number one imported brandy in the country, owning more than half of the market share. It also claims the top spot in the imported spirits category."

The Philippines is Fundador's largest market in the world. In fact, the Philippine sales comprise more than half of the regional sales of Maxxium Southeast Asia.

"We are very fortunate that we are handling market leaders. In the Philippines, Absolut Vodka is the number one imported vodka and Remy Martin is the number one imported cognac. We are indeed able to position our brands in the market by relying on their brand names. Who doesn't know Remy Martin?" says Mendoza. "But of course, we need to sustain the prominence of our brands through strategic marketing and improved distribution."

It also helps that imported brands' target market has spending money. Although it is true that increasing prices of other goods tend to limit the spending power of even moneyed consumers, Maxxium brands, being leaders in their respective categories, would always remain on their shopping list.

And to further sales, the company uses a couple of strategies. First is to increase the base of consumers, and second is to vary and expand the manner of consumption, as it does in cocktails and stirred drinks.

Each brand that Maxxium carries has its own target consumer. Absolut and Jim Beam, for example, caters to the yuppies, while Remy Martin and Macallan are favorites among men in their mid 30s. Maxxium makes sure that their brands get enough exposure in their respective markets.

"The secret is to know and master each brand, as well as their target market. We have to know where each type of market hangs out, for instance, and then we make sure that our products are physically present in those places. We do this through on-premise marketing, which is so far unique in the wines and spirits industry, although some industries are beginning to follow suit," says Mendoza.

On-premise executives visit bars and restaurants assigned to them once or twice a week, during the usual "gimmick hours," to ensure that their brands are positioned well and that their promos are implemented by their partner establishments.

The Philippines has always been a key market for multinational spirits manufacturers due to the high per capita consumption and Filipinos' open attitude toward the category.

With a large young population in the Philippines, Maxxium expects continuous market growth during the next five years.

"The management of Maxxium Philippines will remain bullish on the prospects of the wines and spirits market in the coming years. We are positive that our industry will become even more competitive and Filipino consumers will continue to demand brands and products of the highest quality," Mendoza says.

Liquor man makes the switch

SANVICTORES

THE HANDLING OF WINES AND spirits is a meticulous and painstaking procedure. From their point of origin, they take a long and delicate journey ensuring the right temperature, cleanliness and storage just to have these liquid marvels go from the bottle, to the glass and finally, to the hand who drinks it.

Mike Sanvictores knows everything about this rigorous process. As national sales manager of Premier Wine and Spirits Inc., Mike is the man when it comes to the care of wine and liquor, supervising famous brands such as Jack Daniel's, Jagermeister, Patron, 1800, Alize, Skyy, Belvedere, Hpnotiq, Tequila Rose, Wolf Blass and Ruffino among others.

"Any wrong move can affect the quality of our products. And quality is the name of the game in this industry," he says.

And quality comes with a price. Any wine connoisseur will affirm that keeping the temperature stable during storage is crucial to maintaining the quality of the liquor. And a big chunk of Premier's operational costs is spent on making that happen. "We're not as big as the other players in the industry, so we really need to be efficient in giving our customers the best products possible."

To save on phone bills, Mike switched to Sun Cellular. "After I've started saving 50 percent in phone bills, why wouldn't I?" he says.

Mike had his warehouses in Manila, Cebu, Davao, Subic and Baguio connected through Sun, keeping him posted with daily updates like inventory, deliveries, sales, collections and on-premise promotions, all in real-time too. "I don't hesitate to check our warehouses regularly since I don't think twice about the cost."

Sun invests more than P11 billion annually to increase coverage and capacity, working harder to allow more calls and texts anytime, anywhere.

For poverty-stricken lives looking for …

From page B1

bind these 25 individuals like genes—hard work, determination, sense of honor (paying debts religiously and promptly). And a lot of heart, too… Much of that heart goes out to the workers and family who lent a hand as the enterprise crawled and toddled in the beginning, and continues to play that role even as the venture picks up speed.

Many of the respondents effusively give credit to their of their staff whom they treat as family. Part of that heart is reserved for the microfinance agencies that provided and still provide the much-needed capital at the most crucial times—Alalay sa Kaunlaran, Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, Claveria Agribased Multipurpose Cooperative, Enterprise Bank, Kabalikat sa Maunlad na Buhay, Micro Enterprise Bank, Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation, Opportunity Microfinance Bank, People's Alternative Livelihood Foundation of Sorosogon and Urban Program for Livelihood Finance and Training.

Not a how-to book

If you are looking for a how-to book, this is not for you. There are few lessons here on entrepreneurial skills and techniques. The UP ISSI has published other books for that purpose.

This book is for those who are looking for a ray of sunshine in their poverty-stricken lives and those who are in search for meaning in a string of bad luck either in their personal lives or in their business ventures. The life stories are for both beginning and seasoned entrepreneurs who delight in the insights gained from the experiences of those who make it big in similar situations.

Also, because it is easy and interesting reading, peopled by ordinary human beings who experience ordinary human feelings such as joy and pain but who bring a dimension of specialness into that ordinariness, this volume is for everyone, young or old, who finds inspiration from lives that prevail.

Long after you have finished reading "The Micros that Roared," you may still hear the purring of the kitten that has found its sweet voice. Or is that a tiger (or lion) cub?

(*For inquiries, call 928-7076 to 79 or email info.issi@up.edu.ph.*)

Where green…

From page B1

working conference in Hanoi, Vietnam with further deliberations taking place during the Mumbai, India round in June. ADFIAP is preparing a trainer's guidebook and a resource book containing the measures, methods, tools and instruments for determining environmental governance standards of member-banks, Tambunting disclosed.

National seminar-workshops will be conducted for around 200 senior executives and middle managers of DFIs throughout Asia to provide insights and appreciation of environmental management practices and environmental issues in lending operations.

Based in Makati City since its founding by the Asian Development Bank in October 1976, ADFIAP is the largest organization of its kind in Asia and the Pacific with currently 70 member-banks from 35 countries. In the Philippines, it counts among its members the Development Bank of the Philippines, Planters Development Bank (of which ADFIAP chair Tambunting is also chair and chief executive officer), Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency (PhilExim), RCBC Savings and Queen City Development Bank of Iloilo.

People, Events & Products

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

AIM and AAAIM to host Asian Business Conference

THE ASIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT (AIM) and the Alumni Association of the Asian Institute of Management (AAAIM) are hosting the forthcoming Asian Business Conference slated for March 1,2, 2007 at the Rizal Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

With the theme "AIM for Asia: Unlocking New Opportunities", the Asian Business Conference will bring together the movers and shakers in Asian Business to share best practices and maximize new Asian opportunities. It will also showcase the new AIM for a new Asia.

The powerhouse roster of invited conference speakers include (in alphabetical order) Tanri Abeng, Telkom Indonesia, Felipe Alfonso, AIM business chair, Syed Ali Tawfik Al-Attas, Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM), Jaime Augusto Zobel De Ayala II, Ayala Corporation, Sergey Brin, Google Inc, Tony Tan Caktiong, Jollibee Foods Corporation, Robert Chandran, Chemoil Corporation, Ho Ching, Temasek Holdings Singapore, Victor L.L. Chu, First Eastern Investment Corporation, Euh Yoon Dae, Korea University, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Pryathorn Devakula, Robby Djohan, P.T. Cotralnvestra Adhidana Indonesia, Francis Estrada, Asian Institute of Management, Mark Fuller, Monitor Group, Dr. Victor Kuok-King Fung, Li & Fung, Tan Sri DatoSeri (dr.) Ahmad Sarji Bin Hamid, Permudalan Nasional Berhad Malaysia, Dr. Haruhiko Kuroda, Asian Development Bank, Richard Li, pacific Century Holdings Limited, Dr. David K.P., The Bank of East Asia Ltd., Dato Paduka Timothy Ong Teck Mong, National Insurance Co Berhad.

Also invited were Dr. N.R. Narayana Murthy, Infosys Technologies Ltd and Asian Institute of Management, Rizalino Navarro, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation, Napoleon Nazareno, PLDT/Smart Communications, David Newbigging, Cancer Research of UK, Datok Ir. (Dr.) Mohd Annas Hj. Modh Nor, Federation of AIM Akumni Associations, Roberto De Ocampo, Manuel Pangilinan, PLDT, Jagdish Parikh, Lemuir Group of Companies, Ricardo Pascua, AAAIM-Philippine Chapter, Ramon Del Rosario, Phinma, Anthony Salim, Salim Group, Dr. Arifin Siregar, PT Medco Energy International TBK, Masayoshi Son, SoftBank Corp, Washington Sycip, SGV Group, George Taija, PT Austindo Nusantara Jaya, James Wolfensohn, World Bank, Dr. Vo-tong Xuan, Angiang University-Vietnam and Long Yongtu, Bo'oa Forum for Asia.

Other highlights of the Asian Business Conference are a Trade Exhibit coinciding with the Conference at Makati Shangri-La Hotel on March 1, 2007, Asian Bazaar at the Asian Institute of Management on Feb. 26 to March 2, 2007 and an Asian Filmfest on Feb. 26 to March 2, 2007.

Conference participation fees are P8,500 for alumni and P10,000 for non-alumni. Early registrants can avail of the early bird discounts: 10 percent for individuals and 20 percent for groups (minimum of 20 per group) if they register on or before Jan. 31, 2007.

For more information on AIM and AAAIM's Asian Business Conference, please call the Conference Secretariat at telephone 632-750-6575

Serving as co-presentors of the conference are Smart and PLDT. Other partners are Businessworld, Business Mirror, Entrepreneur Magazine and Petron.

DRAGON FIREWORKS
"Safe, Quality Fireworks... Our Commitment."

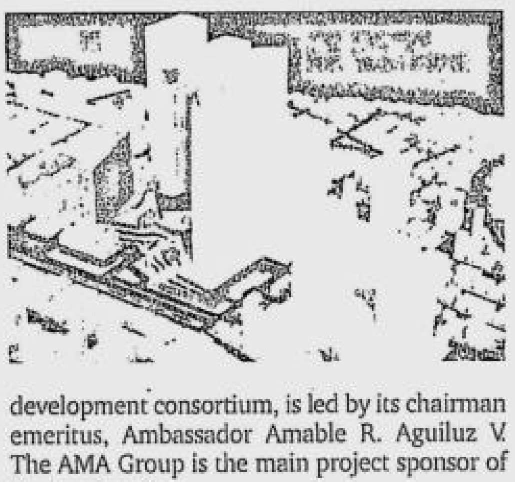
DRAGON FIREWORKS, RGMA INK AGREEMENT

Welcoming the New Year with fireworks has been a part of Filipino tradition. While it can be said before that it is the Chinese who brought fireworks to Philippine shore and lighting fireworks to bring good luck and fortune are of Chinese origin, it has been successfully assimilated into the Filipino culture, which we all can say, is now uniquely Filipino. Of course, celebrating this with safe quality fireworks is really important. This is where Dragon Fireworks' international quality standards come in. Tried and tested for many years, it is the brand chosen by most consumers and professionals alike for quality pyrotechnics. For more info on Dragon Fireworks, their products, and services, please log on to www.dragonfireworks.com. Photo shows Mike Enriquez, president of RGMA Network Inc, and Joven Ong (second from right), president of Dragon Fireworks, forge an agreement on the safety tips on using fireworks in the coming New Year. Also shown in photo during the contract signing are RJ Antonio Seva (left), sales director for radio, GMPI and Bryan Sun (right), account manager, Kyodo Advertising Agency.

LARGEST CHRISTMAS FEAST IN MANILA

This could perhaps be considered as the largest Christmas party in Manila: residents were treated to an early Christmas celebration with 250,000 food packs of Yumburgers, Peach Mango Pies, and juice drinks. They were only too happy that philanthropist Mark Jimenez granted their request to have Jollibee meals for the occasion. Manileños were also gifted with holy water and rosaries, and were treated to Christmas carols and Santa Claus who made a personal visit, bringing cheer to kids and adults alike. The event was part of the program 'Hulog ng Langit ni Mark Jimenez'.

Middle Eastern group to invest in a five-star hotel in Makati



A PROMINENT GROUP THAT OWNS ONE OF the Ritz Carlton Hotels in the Middle East, is set to visit the Philippines in December to discuss with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo the planned development of a one-hectare property for a five-star hotel in the former International School (IS) site located in the central business district of Makati. At 48,832 square meters, IS property is the largest remaining piece of land available for integrated development within Makati City and an excellent location for a luxury hotel development.

Among the components of this IS property development is an IT Park which will house upscale contact centers, among others. The development also includes commercial buildings, residential buildings, a retail complex, and of course, the hotel.

The IS site was awarded to a consortium led by property developer Century Properties, Inc. and its strategic partners Crescent Point Holdings, Ltd. of Singapore and Picar Holdings Inc, a member of the AMA Group of Companies. Picar Holdings, which has a 27.5 percent share in the development consortium, is led by its chairman emeritus, Ambassador Amable R. Aguiluz V. The AMA Group is the main project sponsor of the hotel project.

The AMA Group will present during the visit, IS property's master development plan, which will showcase the five-star hotel. Apart from the Ritz Carlton Group, those who have expressed interest in the hotel project are the Movenpick Group, Jumeira Group, Four Seasons Group, and InterContinental Hotels Group.

*P*roduct FILES

Crustasia Yuletide treats

SZECHUAN CRAB AND STIR FRIED beef and vegetables Thai style, this Yuletide season enjoy the best of Vietnamese, Thai, and Chinese cuisine only at Crustasia at The Podium. A must-try - Emperors Grand Buffet at Crustasia - bring your family and friends from Friday to Sunday, for a grand selection of delectable dishes prepared by the finest chef in Asia. Lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Emperors Buffet includes Crustasia's sumptuous crab and seafood dishes, menu from the ala carte such as King Dao Spareribs, Scallop and Beancurd Hot Pot, Salt and Pepper Jumbo Belly Chops, Pineapple Fried Rice, Pan-Fried Catfish with Green Curry Sauce, Vegetables Thai Style, Stir Fried Beef, Thai Papaya Salad, Eggplant Salad steamed rolls and a lot more plus their Thai Halo Halo Station for desert lovers. Crustasia is located at the third floor, of The Podium, 18 ADB Ave, Ortigas Center. Visit the branch at Crustasia Rockwell Power Plant Mall in Makati City which offers ala carte. Please call 728-5463 or 631-3857 for inquiries and reservations.

Party savvy for the New Year

Hunt's Party Spaghetti
Hunt's Party Spaghetti

THERE'S NO BETTER WAY TO greet the New Year than with an exciting big bash, but pulling it off could be one daunting task. Hunt's, the world's leader in tomato-based products, lets you in on some party planning tips to help make your New Year party preparations less stressful and a whole lot more enjoyable. Plan in advance. Draw up a to-do list then prioritize. Doing things in advance lessens the load on the day of the party. Accept help. If someone offers help, accept it. This way, you can enjoy the party even more. Set the mood. A little background music can jumpstart a party and set its tone. Determine the type of music that your guests enjoy and make a play list. Then, let the player do its job. Relax and mingle. A party should be fun. Instead of getting all worked up and harassed, relax and just enjoy it with your friends and family. Go for easy to prepare yet festive food. There's no point in preparing a menu that asks too much of you. The key is preparing festive but easy-to-prepare foods such as spaghetti. Hunt's Spaghetti Sauces make throwing a party a lot easier and definitely more fun. There are various flavors to choose from such as Hunt's Spaghetti Parmesan Cheese Spaghetti Sauce, perfect for cheese lovers. Fans of the authentic taste of tomato-rich spaghetti will love the Italian Style Spaghetti Sauce. For those looking for the delicate flavor of mushroom in their pasta, there's Hunt's Spaghetti Sauce Mushroom. Kids will definitely love Hunt's newest variant, Hunt's Party Spaghetti. Its sweet blend is specially formulated to tickle the taste buds of Filipino kids. Just like other Hunt's Spaghetti Sauces, the latest Hunt's variant is made from the finest tomatoes with a special blend of herbs and spices. Hunt's can help make your parties a source of relaxation rather than stress. The different Hunt's spaghetti sauce variants in (sizes) are available in supermarkets nationwide.

Court Locator 2006-2007 Edition now off-the press

THE MUCH-AWAITED "COURT LOCATOR 2006-2007" Edition is now off-the press. This was announced by Judge Vicente S. Pulido, the publisher/author. According to Judge Pulido, the "cover" of the Court Locator features Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban, who retired from the Supreme Court Dec. 6, by operation of law, and also Presiding Justice Ruben T. Reyes, the new "Head" of the Court of Appeals. Pulido said the Court Locator contains the latest and complete directory of, and information on the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, Court of Tax Appeals, Regional Trial Courts, Metropolitan Trial Courts, Department of Justice, City and Provincial Prosecutors, the National Labor Relations Commission, Commission on Human Rights, Office of the Ombudsman and Special Prosecutor and Office of the Solicitor General. Of interest to the Trial Lawyers is the inclusion therein of the increased legal fees as approved under Rule 141 of the new Rules of Court, and the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court to be observed by the Trial Judges and Clerks of Court in the conduct of Pre-Trial and use of Deposition-Discovery Measures (A.M. No. 03-1-09-SC dated July 13, 2004), Pulido said. Pulido stated that copies of the Court Locator 2006-2007 are available at the following: Central Book Store; Rex Book Store; La Solidaridad Book Store; Office of the Clerk of Court of the Trial Courts of Manila, Quezon City, Pasay, Caloocan, Makati and Pasig City.

Parade of floats to feature evolution of houses in Philippines

IN RECOGNITION OF THE REAL ESTATE industry and the government's efforts to provide quality low-cost housing to indigent families, the Creba Social Housing Foundation Inc (CSHFI) will hold a float parade featuring the different architectural styles of houses in the Philippines.

The parade - part of the real estate industry's celebration of the Philippine Properties Festival 2007 in January - will trace the evolution of the Filipino dwelling, from rudimentary caves and nipa huts to the various socialized, low, mid and high-end developments available today.

With the theme "Balik-Bahayan: Sariling Bahay Sa Sariling Bayan," the festival aims to convince Filipinos living or working abroad to start building their dream houses in the Philippines.

Dubbed "Kasaysayan ng Bahay Pilipino," the parade will also highlight how the government has, through the years, consistently made available to the average Filipino a multitude of housing projects, said Rose Basa, chair of CSHFI, the social arm of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association (Creba).

"The parade is guaranteed to be a historical and visual spectacle. It will involve 20 floats, each of which designed to reflect the architectural style of a certain period or era of Philippine history, foreign influences, practicality or functionality, or geographical location," Basa said.

"Floats are considered as messages of goodwill. The float parade aims to promote the real estate industry and also establish goodwill to the public. Creativity and design ingenuity in every float, while downplaying over-commercialism, is requested from every participant," she added.

To help sponsors in designing and building their floats, the CSHFI has enlisted the aid of renowned architect Felipe Palafox Jr. to guide architecture students from at least 15 major colleges and universities in Metro Manila.

"Designers and builders must keep the integrity and fidelity of the designs of the Filipino dwellings and the periods to which they belong. To ensure this, an authority on the given periods would be asked to review the design for each float prior its approval," Basa said.

Architecture students of several colleges and universities have already signed up, chosen the era they wish to tackle, and begun collaborating with Palafox's top-caliber architects on the floats.

The parade is sponsored in part by the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council and its member agencies, including the Home Mutual Development Fund (Pag-IBIG).

Proceeds of the float parade, which will traverse Roxas Boulevard from the Cultural Center of the Philippines complex to the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City, will go to chosen beneficiaries of the Creba Social Housing Foundation.

For details and inquiries, call the Philippine Properties Festival 2007 secretariat at (632) 864-0224, 819-2058 to 59, or (0919) 849-5648.

Clips

Automatic's '58 Merry Christmases'

AUTOMATIC CENTRE, THE APpliance authority for almost 60 years now, gives you over P5 million worth of reasons to celebrate the yuletide season with its "58 Merry Christmases" promo. Scheduled to run until Jan. 21, the promo gives you a chance to win any of the 58 exciting raffle prizes such as LCD tvs, projection tvs, home theaters, dvd players, digital cameras, camcorders mobile phones, magic sing units, mp3 players, La-Z Boy recliners and furniture showcases! But the treat does not stop there - exciting freebies and giveaways are available for customers who delve into its wide array of top brand appliances, audio video products and gadgets - all available at very cool prices and affordable monthly terms. Hurry! Visit Automatic Cente now at any of their branches - Greenbelt 1 and Glorietta 4 in Makati; Market! Market! Mall in Taguig; Festival Supermall and Ayala Town Center in Alabang; SM South Mall Las Piñas; Ortigas Home Depot in Pasig; Robinson's Place Pioneer and Edsa Central in Mandaluyong; Tutuban Centermall in Manila; Lifestyle Center in Greenhills; Robinsons Galeria, Gateway Araneta, Value Station Cubao and SM North Edsa in Quezon City. You can also visit any of the Sogo Home and Office Center outlets at Glorietta 1 in Makati; Ali Mall in Cubao; Robinsons Place Metro East in Pasig, Edsa Central Pavilion in Mandaluyong, Zabarte Town Center in Caloocan and in Tutuban Centermall 1, Manila.

M&M's Christmas Promo

LAUNCHED LAST NOVEMBER, THE M&M'S JAZZ Up Your Christmas Promo has gotten so much response already. You too can still have a chance at winning fun fabulous prizes this Yuletide season. M&M's is giving away Honda Jazz cars to three lucky people in the grand draw, plus loads of other great prizes weekly. To join, all you have to do is buy specially marked packs of M&M's chocolate candies, look for the code on the sticker and text in your entry to 29767. Wrappers must be kept to claim your prize. Getting lucky has never been this easy. So get those thumbs working so you too can have a chance at winning these cool prizes and have a Merry Christmas this year. Check out posters and print ads for more information. Remember, all it takes is a few chocolatey bites and you can eat your way to a brand new car, mobile phone, or an ultra hip mp3 player. What a way to have a perfect Christmas! And the good news is, the promo is extended until Jan. 15, 2007 and the grand draw to be held on Jan. 24, 2007. It doesn't get any better than this! So what are you waiting for, grab all the M&M's chocolate candies you can to have a Jazzy Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

'New Year Countdown' at the Century Park Hotel

WELCOME 2007 IN STYLE, BLISS, AND SERENITY as Century Park Hotel highlights the celebration with exciting activities. The New Year Blast Double 07 theme at the Atrium Lounge on Dec. 31 from 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. will let you enjoy the greatest hits of the sexy and immortal James Bond themes to the American standards such as Frank Sinatra, Cole Porter and Dean Martin. A soiree of songs and dances featuring Raul Montessa, Ana Feleo, Bea Garcia, Shark, Altair Alonso, and the One Top Hat Live Entertainment Dancers. The house DJ and mobile will surely make you groove starting at 9 p.m. All guests who will be in their Gatsby inspired attire will also win exciting prizes. As you celebrate in style, indulge in the especially selected New Year's Eve menu from 9 to 11 p.m. Don't forget to watch out the exciting balloon drop at the strike of 12 midnight. Cafe in the Park and Unsui Japanese Restaurant diners may show their receipt to avail only a minimum consumable amount of P500+++ on beverage. Take an exciting view of the Manila skyline with a colorful fireworks display as you welcome 2007 with Miles Poblete at the 19th floor. Entitled as A Very Special Countdown with Chanteuse Miles Poblete at the Top of the Century, show starts from 9 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., with a minimum of P700+++ per person on food and beverage consumption. The first 50 guests will be given party hats with blow horn to welcome the year 2007! For inquiries and reservations please call 528-8888.

Cutting costs not enough, creating demand is

Marketing communications network adopts new concept to help businesses achieve growth

By Joel V. Nigos

FOR SOME TIME, THE CONCEPT of supply and demand helped businesses realize their growth targets. In fact, this philosophy has existed for more than 200 years and communications and marketing companies have been relying on it in their efforts to build the businesses of their clients.

But so much has changed since the idea was introduced two centuries ago.

The marketplace is now much more competitive, new markets keep on sprouting, and new media are growing. The pendulum has swung away from the traditional to more creative approaches to business.

This prompted McCann, the world's and the country's largest marketing communications network, to reassess and redefine its work amid the changes in the marketplace.

As a response to these new market dynamics, McCann adopted a new philosophy, known as Demand Creation.

This new thinking rebrands McCann into a multi-faceted marketing communications company composed of different disciplines—from advertising to media planning and buying, from relationship marketing tó activation, from brand consultancy to PR and even specialized communications for healthcare—with the ultimate aim of stimulating demand for marketers' products and services.

The new concept creates McCann Worldgroup Philippines (from McCann Erickson Phils. Inc.).

Under this are companies such as Momentum (event marketing, sponsorship, sales promotion); MRM Partners (direct/customer relationship management; online marketing communications through Zentropy); Weber Shandwick (public relations), Universal McCann (media planning/buying; communications architecture); Torre Lazur McCann (healthcare communications), and FutureBrands (brand consulting and brand design).

Radical change

Eric Einhorn, McCann's global chief strategist and recently appointed regional director for Asia-Pacific, says that Demand Creation is radically changing brand management paradigms and business growth strategies.

The concept, he says, is molded for today's demand-driven economy in a world that has become abundant in supply. As more and more companies realize that cutting costs only yields short-term gains, the most sustainable way to deliver the bottomline is by creating demand for one's brand.

"The business world has changed, the marketing world has changed and above all the consumer world has changed. CEOs worldwide even believe that the key to success is sustaining demand and keeping that demand up even at night. There's a need to engage people in order to maintain that demand. It's not just about 'this is nice about my product I hope you can buy,'" says Einhorn, author of the new philosophy.

EINHORN

More than efficiencies

Einhorn has led strategic initiatives on a variety of McCann-Erickson's clients such as MasterCard, Nestle and General Motors. He's also responsible for Microsoft's corporate brand strategy and led the expansion of MasterCard's "Priceless" campaign globally.

Einhorn cites that for decades businesses have been able to grow profits through efficiencies like use of better technology. This led to more efficient production which lowered production costs, resulting in lower prices of consumer goods.

But because of competition, companies find they can no longer grow just by increasing efficiencies.

"This new Demand Creation project is taking the cost out of the system but still able to get better profits. Businesses now have to focus on the top-line and create demand again. The world is no longer a supply-driven economy," he says.

With McCann (now McCann Worldgroup) adhering to the new philosophy, Einhorn says that they can now create demand better for their clients.

"If you look at clients and client partners especially the big companies, they are not used to acting in an entrepreneurial way. Companies (or CEOs) manage structures, cost, profits, persons, and they do this through analysis or understanding. What Demand Creation needs is an entrepreneurial, risk-taking, innovative thinking."

What demand creation does is give a point of focus to creativity.

"The whole demand chain process starts with understanding where consumer markets are heading. That means all our creativity is geared toward the business model that's why we can deliver demand creation potentially to companies."

'AIDA' philosophy

Einhorn emphasizes that there's nothing wrong with the old AIDA (attention-interest-desire-action) philosophy. Twenty years ago, he says, the world was dominated by packaged or consumer goods and that old philosophy sits right well with creating demand for these products.

"We put a stimulus, we put something in the mind of consumers, the consumers go to the supermarket, and if they want it they take it. It was sort of a very long term view of brand relationship. The problem with that is unlike before consumers now are people we cannot control and who are in-charge of their own worlds. They now control us. Just thinking that we put an image out there and we expect them to respond no longer works. Today's consumers got the mouse, they got the joystick, and they got the Internet. Customers can create their own sell in one hour in the Internet. We have to go after them. If we don't engage them, we're not going to win," Einhorn stresses.

He admits though that advertising still does a very good job of painting to thousands of people what a brand stands for. But since the whole supply-demand process has changed, there's a need to engage people.

"So this idea of building a brand for eternity no longer works that way. Brand building has a long-term view. Demand Creation has a long-term and short-term view. It uses brands as assets. It's a way to talk to consumers but the purpose is just to build the brand. There are lots of differences in the world today, much more fast-changing, much more now. So this whole sequence about the old model saying first you get attention, then you get consideration, then you get desire, and slowly convert people to take your brand is no longer that useful."

Changes

Changes in consumer behavior, in consumer expectations, in people's (businessmen's) expectations of business, and the wider use of non-traditional media are the factors that brought about this new Demand Creation philosophy.

Rolled out by its parent company two years ago, its local office has adopted the new concept recently.

"The changes in consumer behavior worldwide are also felt by businesses here," observes Patricia Arches, McCann Worldgroup Philippines president and CEO who has steered McCann to new levels during her watch in the last two decades.

McCann's local clients include Coca-Cola, San Miguel Beer, Globe Telecom, Nestle consumer products such as Maggi and Coffeemate, and Jack and Jill snacks.

McCann Worldgroup has operations in 132 countries as well as portfolio of specialized marketing companies.

How casual meeting started pioneering service business

WHAT STARTED AS A CASUAL meeting at a bar in Guam paved the way for a pioneering service industry in the Philippines. Over a few drinks, Rod Feliciano, then a young bachelor, met two of DHL's founders, Adrian Dalsey and Larry Hillblom, and was offered to start a courier service business in the Philippines. It was then still a small company in the United States, but Feliciano agreed without much thought, and in no time, DHL was born in the Philippines.

The year was 1969.

"It was a very casual meeting in a bar. During our conversation, Dalsey said: 'Hey, why don't you guys join us?' I had an American friend with me then, Guy Combs, who eventually became my partner in the business. Just like everyone else, when you're young, you look for business that you can nurture from the beginning and eventually grow. In my case, it was something accidental," Feliciano recalled.

Small courier

Back then, DHL was a small courier service running between San Francisco, Los Angeles, Honolulu and Guam. The company was established because the pioneers saw an opportunity when a shipping and cruise liner docked in Honolulu. They thought about partnering with the company via a courier service. Robert Lynn, their other partner, was then still with a travel agency. Seeing a conflict of interest with his job, he resigned to go full time with the courier service company.

"There were freight forwarding companies, but there was no courier service. I thought to myself that this won't cost me anything. At that time I had a sugarcane farm in Pampanga, but I thought farming was on its decline so I decided to go back to Manila. Things were also slow for me in the province. I was schooled in the U.S., and I believed I can do better in the big city. Since I love cars, I bought a gasoline service station in Mabini. That's where I started DHL in the Philippines," Feliciano said.

First customer

DHL Philippines' first customer was Mobil Oil Philippines, which also had its office in Guam. Others soon followed.

Feliciano said it wasn't really a difficult business. It was straightforward pick-up and delivery at that time. "The big difference was how we handle documents, as opposed to postal service which was somehow unreliable. People gave me their paperwork because I picked them up everyday, unlike with the freight companies who consolidate. They waited until they had a certain weight before shipping it out. With DHL, it was everyday fast service. That was how we started door-to-door. DHL pioneered that."

Hands-on

With no employees, Feliciano ran the business hands-on. Most packages were documents. As the weight got a little heavier, he had his accountant and cashier at the gas station pitch in until finally he had to hire people dedicated to deliveries and other DHL business. As the need grew, he hired more people.

"The only stumbling block then was clearing DHL cargo with Customs. I asked a friend, Louie Tabuena, to introduce me to the then airport OIC Colonel Mascardo. But Louie said Colonel Mascardo was a very strict guy. But we met anyway and I explained what my business was all about and what I needed. He told me to submit my proposal. Everything fell into place after that. I also got to meet the people from Pan American airlines so I expanded my network."

Now chair of DHL Express Philippines, Feliciano believes DHL helped shape the country's courier and logistics industry. The challenge he now sees is competition, and the rising costs of doing business.

FELICIANO

"We pioneered the door-to-door business. When people wanted to ship something abroad, whether DHL got the business or not, people would often say 'Ipa-DHL mo na yan.' To be top of mind for people's needs is really something."

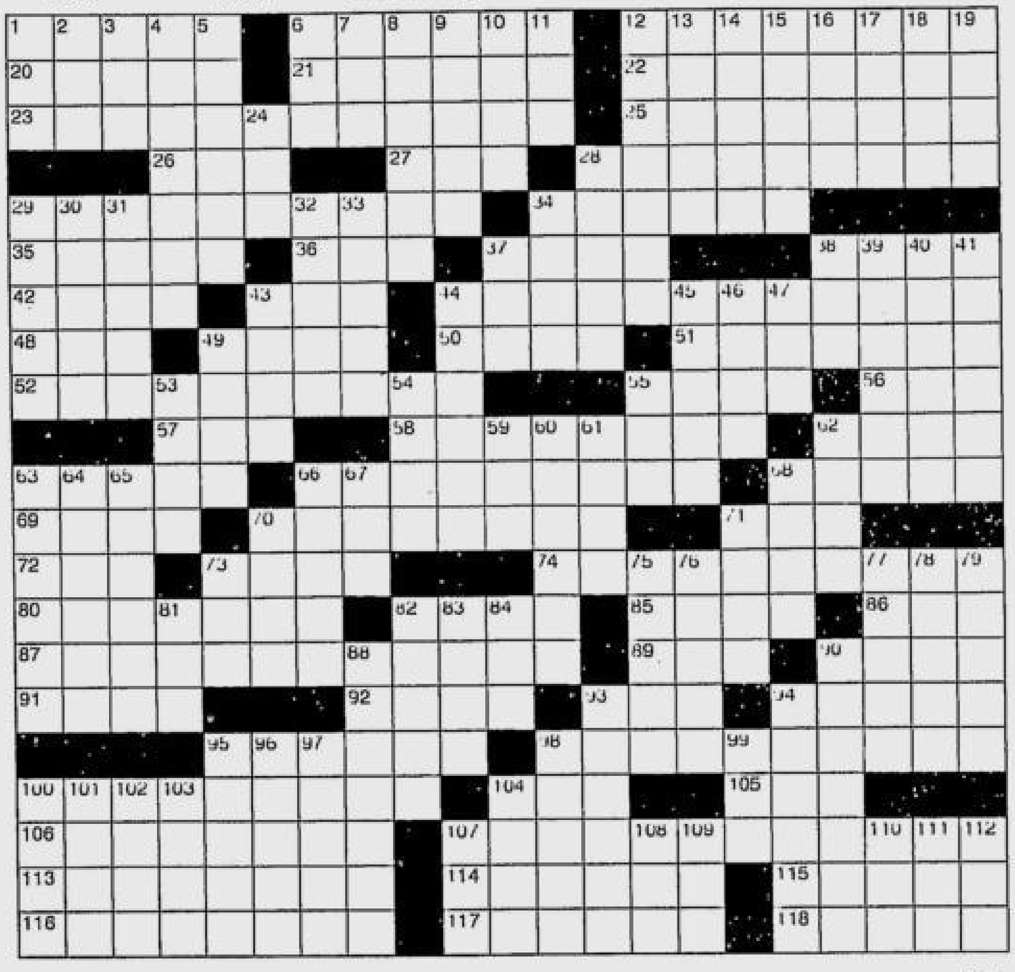
DHL is the global market leader of the international express and logistics industry, specializing in providing innovative and customized solutions from a single source.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo **COUNTDOWN**

ACROSS
1 Die away
6 Searched thoroughly
12 Explosion units
20 Big name in fine china
21 Split
22 Airline to Rome
23 Agent taking a cut
25 Religious awakenings
26 Refrain bit
27 Address for a man
28 Cat's gift, it's said
29 Cassette tape forerunner
34 Have the final turn
35 Number after deux
36 "Come again?"
37 Bouquet
38 WWW pages are written in it
42 Itar- — (Russian news agency)
43 Pulled off
44 1954 Akira Kurosawa film
48 Year, in Sao Paulo
49 Basil or Braxton
50 Butter portions
51 Rust-causing agent
52 Revolver variety
55 Pupil setting
56 With 85-Across, potential paternity prover
57 Atop, poetically
58 Flight paths
62 "You've — warned!"
63 Golfer Nick
66 Where the last major Civil War battle was fought
68 Like cats and rabbits
69 Savings options, for short
70 Old salt
71 — Lingus
72 Dreamy sleep stage
73 Lane of "Superman"
74 Like cats and rabbits
80 Depot
82 Spanish house
85 See 56-Across
86 — bit (soon)
87 Stars of old slapstick, with "The"
89 Green prefix?
90 Verb before "thou"
91 Poet Teasdale
92 Bank-protecting org.
93 Lady of Sp.
94 Locale
95 Overwhelm with noise
98 Successful hoops shot
100 Like an amoeba
104 Maui garland
105 Miles — hour
106 One of a fairy-tale trio
107 Cry after a countdown
113 Has a link with
114 Shar-Pei and Shih Tzu, e.g.
115 Shake off
116 Having more frozen rain
117 Port of Ukraine
118 Swank

DOWN
1 Cockpit stat
2 Drone, e.g.
3 Novelist Packer
4 Feat performer's challenge
5 Puts forth
6 XXX times X
7 Corrida yell
8 Person of integrity and honor
9 Dyeing art
10 Unceasingly
11 Freudian article
12 Soprano Horne
13 Verdugo of Hollywood
14 Bequeaths
15 Lopsided
16 Rikki-Tikki- —
17 Regal name of Norway
18 Cairo's river
19 Impudence
24 Sewer sight
28 Scent detectors
29 Kett and Place
30 Shiraz citizen
31 Fenway Park cheer
32 Huge herbivore
33 Taxpayer's headache
34 Pol's milieu: Abbr.
37 It may be black-eyed
38 Patricia Neal's Best Actress film
39 "Sell!" yeller
40 Method
41 Liturgical chant
43 Way in
44 More agile
45 Salve sites
46 Allies' foe
47 Prefix with fortune
49 One of TV's Huxtables
53 Lawn bases
54 Roof feature
55 Squid squirt
59 "Mayberry —" (old TV series)
60 Bathtub sponges
61 Ship of myth
62 Small town
63 Novel things
64 Soulful Franklin
65 Actress Hedy
66 Swoon
67 "— the law"
68 Toe locales
70 Courts
71 Additionally
73 Fish story
75 In — (not yet born)
76 Brief review
77 Huge
78 Come as a result
79 Librarian's stamp
81 Steeped drink
82 Like a cryptogram
83 Opposed to, in Dogpatch
84 "Wait a —!"
88 Person with a proposal
90 15th-century English king
93 Rips off
94 TV watcher
95 Ledger entry
96 Nicholas Gage novel
97 Off to — start (behind schedule)
98 Wigwam
99 Not shut, in verse
100 Decides (to)
101 Hammerer's target
102 Fencing weapon
103 Example
104 Cooking fat
107 Showtime alternative
108 QBs try to gain these
109 Supersecret org.
110 "Dig in!"
111 Ax's cousin
112 Playa del —, CA



answer on page D5

Filipino firm bags int'l awards

FILIPINO DESIGN FIRM Systemat Group of Companies bagged ten awards, in four categories, in the recent Global Corporate Identity 3 competition in the United States. The competition, sponsored by Creativity Inc., an independent award-giving body based in the United States, is held yearly to recognize creative workmanship of design companies around the globe.

Systemat's design works for RFM Corporation's Selecta Flavored Milk, Sunkist Fruit Juices; and Sunkist Instant Drink, and Sysu International's McCormick Mexican Seasoning won in the Package Design category.

The company's creations for One Nakpil Global Ventures, Inc. and West Pacific Data Solutions were cited in the Trademark/Logo Design category, while its projects for West Pacific Data Solutions and First Filipino Fastfood Corp., owner of Pupung & Friends Fast Pinoy Foods restaurant, were awarded for Stationary Design.

The interiors and mural of Baker Fresh Foods Philippines, operator of Delifrance in the country, were recognized in the Signage & Environmental Graphics category. The enhanced interior architecture design of Delifrance exudes French-ness and freshness consistently in all areas within the store, delivering the image of a fresh and chic "Noveau Delifrance."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Mönmilk
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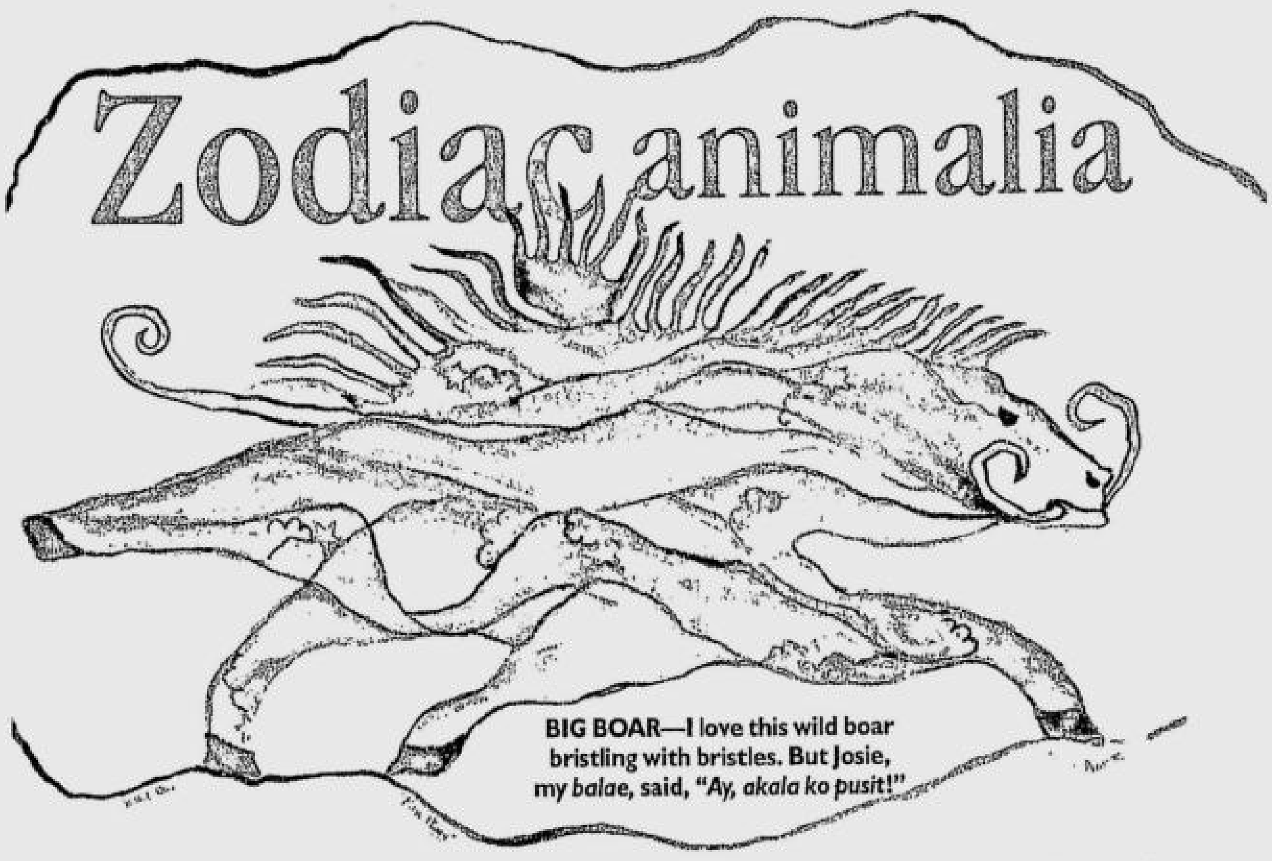
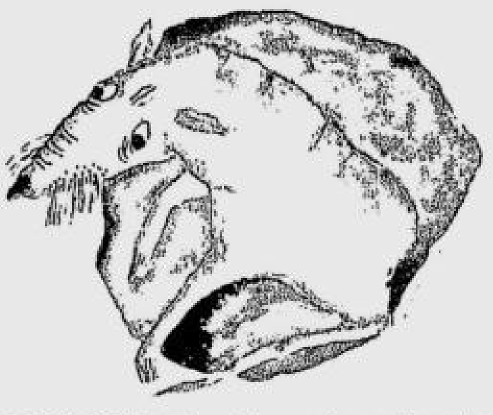
PURE MILK
AVAILABLE AT LEADING SUPERMARKETS NATIONWIDE

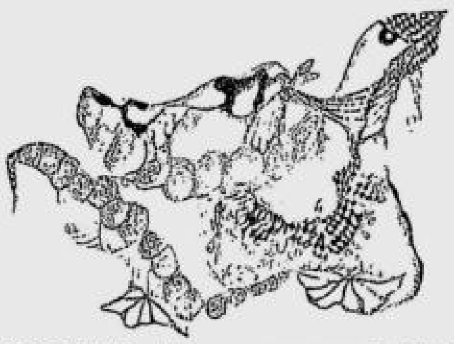
Zodiac animalia



BIG BOAR—I love this wild boar bristling with bristles. But Josie, my *balae*, said, "*Ay, akala ko pusit!*"



BORN BLUE—The rat jumped over the ox to get to the Buddha first. This rat is atypical. He's sorry he's a rat.



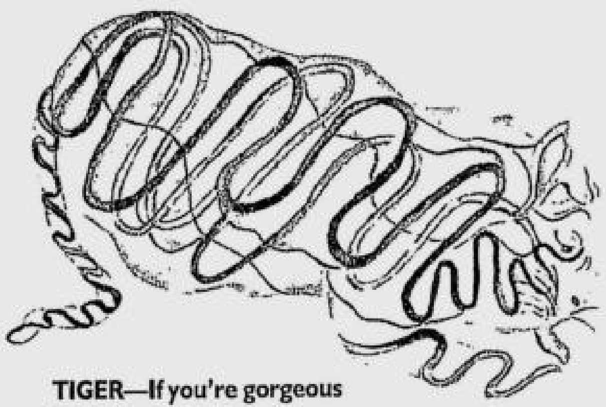
WHATEVER—I drew a goose or a duck but someone thought it's an elephant or a seal. Or a turtle.

Text and artworks by Gilda Cordero Fernando

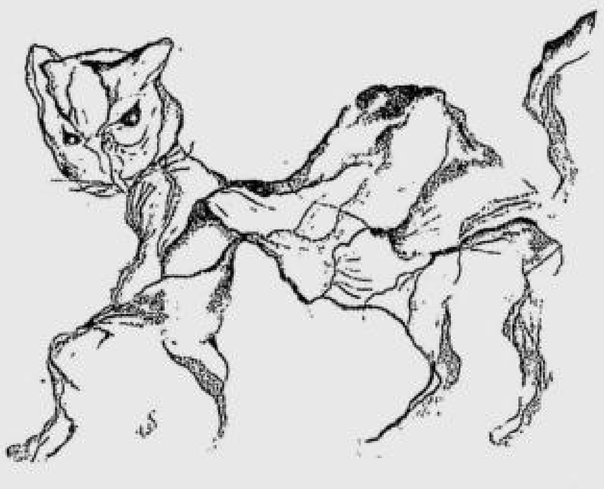
WHAT'S WITH "DAWG," "Ket," "Tired Horse," and "Gay Dragon?" They're zodiac icons! That's what I did last November. I painted and painted them. And painted some more. I couldn't find a word to write. Maybe I was brain-dead from shopping in 168.

My seer friend Bernie says when you need help for something, you close your eyes and call on your spirit guide. And a spirit guide is not necessarily one particular soul—for indeed, if I needed art advice how could I get it if my spirit guide were color blind?

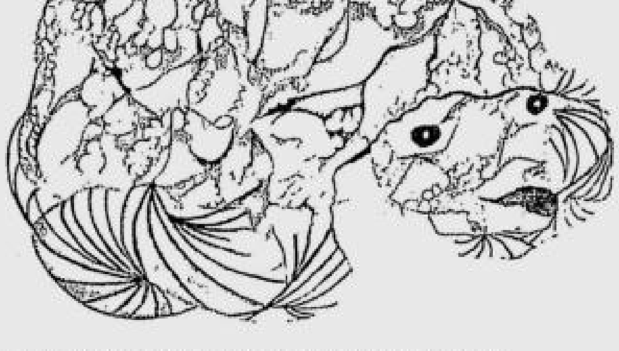
So one calls at large to all artist souls out there. And they come rushing down, eager to help! Onib Olmedo and Ang Kiukok and HR Ocampo and Gustav Klimt and Michelangelo. Sorry, guys, this is the result. Have a nice new year!



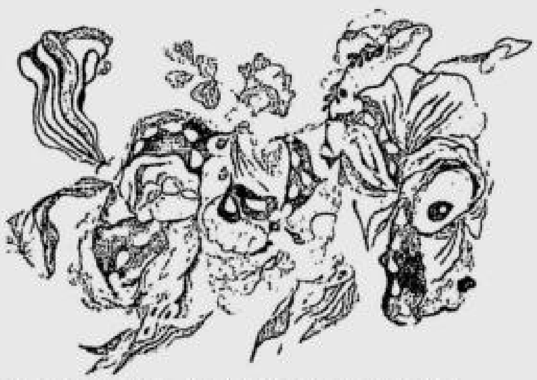
TIGER—If you're gorgeous but fierce there's a chance you'll reincarnate as a tiger. But this one is lovable.



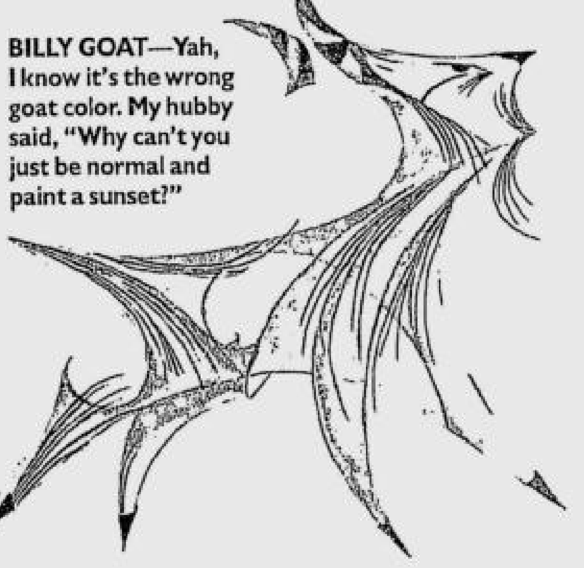
"KET"—My daughter-in-law hates my cat who eats the goldfish in her *kawa*. Mingming looks like this to her.



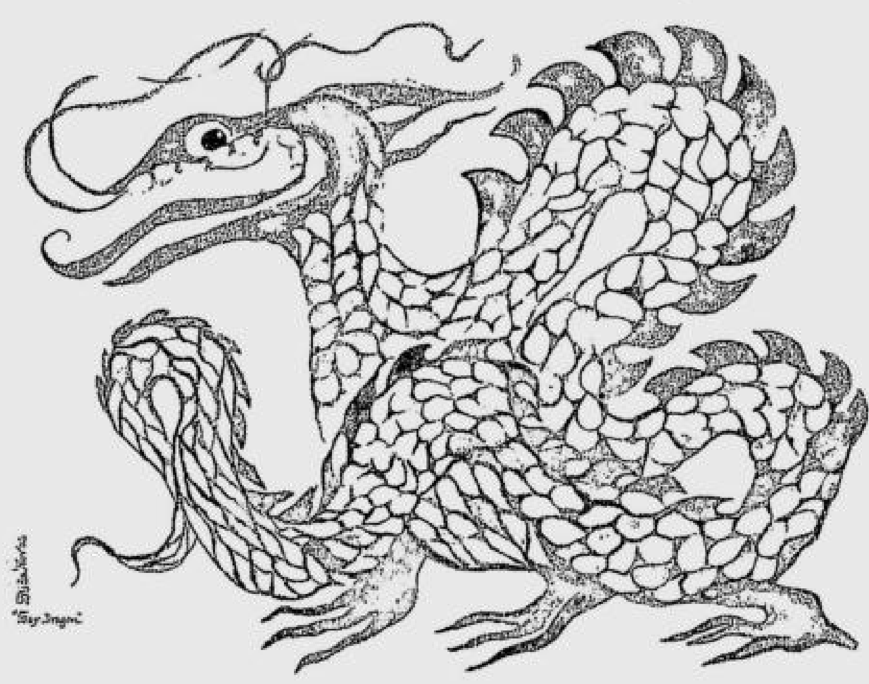
"DAWG"—I guess I miss Puypuy, our white Lab who got lost. This is his red version.



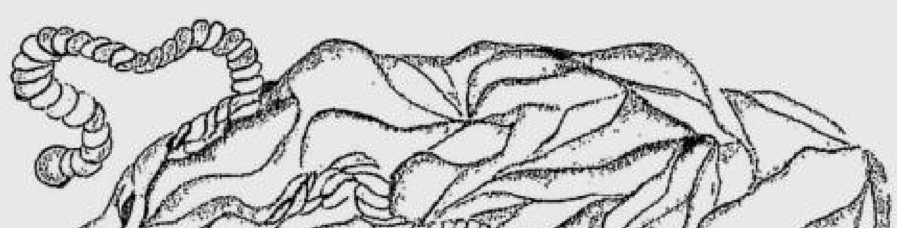
TIRED HORSE—This is an overburdened, overachieving horse loaded with decorations and problems. It is my zodiac sign.



BILLY GOAT—Yah, I know it's the wrong goat color. My hubby said, "Why can't you just be normal and paint a sunset?"



GAY DRAGON—My grandkids are experts at drawing dragons. They complain that mine has no fire and no balls.



KALABOO—The carabao is a stand-in for the ox. Millennia must have gone through those horns.

(Some of these animals will be in the exhibit of PLAC [Philippine Literary Arts Council] artworks, curated by Krip Yuson and Sid Hildawa, at the Cultural Center of the Philippines main gallery Jan. 25-Feb. 28, 2007.).

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MONIQUE Lhuillier show producer and husband Tom Bugbee, Luanne Erni, JR Isaac, Sea Princess, Nokia CEO William Hamilton-Whyte and Tim Yap

PIID OATH-TAKING. Johnny Hubilla, Tessa Alindogan, Dr. Leonor Tripon-Rosero, Sea Princess, Sonia Olivares and Tony Adriano

Milestones of 2006

TESSA!
Tessa Prieto-Valdes

LOOKING BACK, I would like to honor the gigantic events and monumental charity projects that made 2006 an incredibly exciting year. Without these memorable and vibrant activities, the year would have passed by too quickly.

It was an exciting year. I had a date with the reefs off Palawan and got blessings from the Virgin of Baclaran

Variety is the spice of life. Indeed, this year witnessed a concoction of spectacular openings, energetic adventures, bustling trips, bejeweled affairs and unique festivals. In this eclectic mix, the beautiful thing is that most were orchestrated with charity in mind and thus raised much-needed funds for several organizations.

Starting off 2006 on a most festive and happy mood, who can forget the EuroStar Carnival that brought back the kid in all of us as it brightly lit up The Fort sky with its awesome rides? January-born **Tim Yap** of INQUIRER Super and my daughter **Annika** celebrated their birthdays there and invited friends all dressed in loud, colorful carnival outfits.

February ushered in a fitness cycle that got me back into athletic fighting form. Former HSBC CEO Warner Manning organized the Charity Challenge, raising over P2 million for Children's Hour. The tiring-but-fun triathlon around the Manila Polo Club featured amateur athletes who raced to support this worthy cause and lovable Warner, too.

Adventuresome **Ernie** and **Jeena Lopez** were part of this event. Little did they know that this would kick off their energetic year into high gear, as they later became one of two Filipino pairs in "The Amazing Race Asia"!

March was the month Furnitalia opened its doors to clients with elegantly sophisticated tastes in European furniture. Its high-end, stylish furnishings are displayed in an all-glass, impressive building at The Fort. Furnitalia has made leather pieces and extraordinary lighting fixtures available to local urbanites.

That same month, high-profile show-biz princess **Ruffa Guiterrez-Bektas** held a celebrity charity garage sale to donate over a million to calamity-stricken St. Bernard, Leyte. She personally arranged for celebrities to actually sell their outfits and have photo sessions with guests. Even dressed down and sans makeup, Ruffa is beautiful, both inside and out.

BENCH King Ben Chan

Tubbataha rendezvous

The summer months were spent at sea. First, I had the chance to go scuba diving at the world-best Tubbataha Reefs off Palawan, with a most honored buddy, PGMA herself. My second adventure was being part of the inaugural cruise onboard the world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean's Freedom of the Seas.

June marked my 12th wedding anniversary, serenely celebrated at Boracay Tropics in the country's top tourist destination, Boracay. This month was also the 100th anniversary celebration of the Redemptorist Missions in the Philippines. This is close to my heart because the Redemptorists brought Our Lady of Perpetual Help to the country. I am a regular Wednesday devotee at Baclaran Church and this miraculous Virgin has granted many prayers and petitions.

July was a mega month. At gigantic, sprawling Mall of Asia, the world's largest cinema brand, IMAX, welcomed viewers to watch special feature films on a monumental screen. Superman never looked so powerful and good-looking as in the IMAX 3D movie version.

Big only got bigger with the biennial Bench Show at the Araneta Coliseum. The show was a most smashing disco party, with its filled-to-capacity fashion parade highlighted with live performances by The Village People and Sister Sledge. Bench king **Ben Chan** hosted the spectacular affair as his beautiful endorsers paraded their sizzling figures to sparkling disco themes.

DIVING with PGMA at Tubbataha Reefs onboard the TriStar

Royal blood

August brought true royalty to our city, and a most genuinely philanthropic one at that. **Andrea Pierre Casiraghi**, son of HRH Princess **Caroline** of Monaco, touched the hearts of so many of the less fortunate living in the depressed areas of Tondo and Payatas. Together with the volunteers of the Virlanie Foundation, Prince Andrea also visited different Virlanie Centers and youth prisons. His gracious presence brought a warm sense of hope and an inspiring message of help to those in need.

As I turned another year older in September, my focus was on the Assumption Mission Schools and Velada preparations. As with any homecoming, it was wonderful to be among long-lost classmates from all over the world celebrating our 25th year from Assumption high school. It was doubly special because the Golden Batch included my mom, **Marixi Prieto**, who has been so generous to the school and others.

The much-awaited event of the year was the Monique Lhuillier Gala Show and Dinner at the Makati Shangri-La. After three years of preparations, the most elegant fashion show of Hollywood sensation **Monique Lhuillier-Bugbee**, with a very special performance by world-famous and new mom **Lea Salonga-Cheng**, was presented to a generous audience that raised over P10 million for the Bantay Bata projects of **Gina Lopez** and Asia Society Philippines.

December kicked off with the bejeweled birthday party of Tatler's top list host, **Mellie Ablaza.** The astonishing décor and fireworks show were a grand backdrop to tiara-adorned ladies who danced through the lovely evening.

2006 was indeed filled with momentous occasions. These milestones mark the passage of yet another precious year. As we reflect on the past, let us not fail to acknowledge and honor those we love and who deserve proper credit for a good year.

Happy New Year, Philippines!

E-mail me at seaprincess@inquirer.com.ph

Short-lived affair gets a sequel

EMILY'S POST
Emily A. Marcelo

DEAR EMILY,

Four years ago, my husband had an affair and a child with a woman who was a business associate for a while. My husband was jobless then and he was helping in my production of fashion shows.

This woman, who is 12 years his junior and is also married (to an OFW) and has three children, was an assistant to one of the sponsors. They had a month-long affair and she got pregnant.

When my husband left to work abroad, he sent money to support his child with her. My problem started when my husband came home. This woman demanded that he sleep in her house so the child would see him in the morning upon waking up. And he would.

Then when he went home to his real family, she would send him innumerable text messages. She is now telling my husband to pay for the house she lives in with her three children and her child with my husband. Why should she do this when she has a husband of her own?

My husband tells me he is doing this for the child and I should think positive. He tells me he loves me but he does everything to please her as well. I love my husband and he is a very good father to my two girls who think the world of him.

I am going crazy and getting sick of this affair. We have accepted this child and it's okay with me if my husband brings her home to us to be taken care of. But he insists he has to go to this woman's house so the child will not be alienated from him.

I think this is all crap!

MARTYRED WIFE

Yes, you are indeed a wife trying to be a martyr. But martyrs die for a cause—a noble cause! There's no nobility in suffering for people who take advantage of one-night stands!

It is your husband whom you should straighten out here. If he just wants to be close to the child, why doesn't he take up your offer and bring the kid home to you, his family? But to stay overnight in the woman's house in the pretext of "fatherly love" is a lot of bull.

He already made a mistake once and is already paying for it monthly. Is this long-drawn suffering for his family going to be endless?

He must choose between you or the other woman. From the looks of it, he has found a complete fool who believes everything he says—you! You're so afraid he'd leave you and you've become blind, deaf and brain-dead to what's happening around you.

You're holding on to that tiny thread of hope that maybe—just maybe—your husband's professions of love for you is true. Just remember that love should bring no pain because love is joy. Love is considerate. Love is caring.

Is he making you feel any of those?

If you have already allowed him unrestricted sleep-overs with the other woman, the problem now is in your court. You should have put your foot down at the first transgression. You already lost him then. Anything else that follows is dust in the wind, a fool's paradise.

He and the other woman will just brush you off and continue whatever it is they're doing. Though late, the change must start from you, the aggrieved party. Commit yourself to a decision now and stick to it. Otherwise, consider your husband and you a lost cause.

E-mail the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject: Lifestyle, or send your letters to INQUIRER. *Listen to Ms Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.*

Casino Español celebrates feast of the Three Kings

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Darang

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY IS celebrated Jan. 6. It's more popularly known as Feast of the Three Kings because Baby Jesus manifested Himself to the visitors from the East bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Epiphany means "manifestation."

Spain marks the feast and so do we at the Casino Español de Manila. Children gather to receive gifts from the Three Kings.

Katrina Ursua-Ripoll, whose husband Tirso Ripoll played the Red King or King Melchor two years ago, describes what has become a tradition at Casino Español on TM Kalaw St., Ermita.

Katrina said, "For Spanish children, this is the most important day of the year when they wake up to find that Los Reyes Magos (Three Kings) have left gifts for them. Santa may leave them a token gift on Christmas Day, but the Three Kings are their favorites, especially Baltazar who rides a donkey and is believed to [have left] the gifts.

"On Jan. 6, the Three Kings continue their good work, distributing gifts to children in hospitals all over Spain.

"At the Casino Español, the Three Kings (usually members', sons) begin their journey by riding on horseback around the casino, distributing candies and little gifts to children.

"At the casino, they are warmly greeted by parents and children. The kings then [sit] on special thrones on a festive stage in the middle of the Patio de Orqidias.

"Then, the children... line up... [and] the kings distribute the gifts, pose for pictures and then wave goodbye... After the kings [leave], the club offers entertainment, games and lots of treats for the kids while their parents catch up and enjoy Spanish *tapas*.

"The children play with their new toys, watch a magic show, gather candies from *piñatas* and make friends with other children."

New Magi

This year's Three Kings are Aly Reyes, as the Red King or King Melchor; Fernando de Liano, as the White King or King Gaspar; and Digs Ramos, as the Black King or King Baltazar.

Katrina says there will also be a Tres Reyes Bazaar. Interested parties can rent a table for P2,500. Text 0917-8930586 or call 5252302.

Rebecca Amoranto-de Liano and Paco Magsaysay are events committee co-chairs. Members are Aurora Eizmendi, Katrina, Bea Syguia-Ripoll, whose husband Roman was the Black King in another time; Margarita Ripoll and Estela Antic. The president of the 113-year-old casino is Francisco Gomez de Liano.

Mission

Since Manuel Navoa was acquitted in 1978 by the Supreme Court of a crime he did not commit, he has been visiting prisons all over the country giving inmates their basic needs like toothpaste, bath soaps, toothbrushes, laundry soaps, etc.

He is supported by benefactors, particularly Fr. Arnold Layoc, head of the Sacrament of Love Foundation, a prison ministry. Father Layoc is also Navoa's spiritual director and parish priest of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Brookside Hills, Cainta, Rizal.

Navoa could have become a successful engineer had he not been accused of setting fire to the Gotesco Theater on C.M. Reato Avenue in the '70s. After staying in prison for years, the Supreme Court found him innocent of the crime.

The suffering would have been enough for him to lose his faith but Navoa helped his fellow prisoners, instead.

Those who want to respond to God's call to help can text Navoa at 0920-2772840 or Father Layoc at 0919-8870595 or call 6562533. Navoa is scheduled to bring basic things to the prisons in Bukidnon and Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao after the New Year.

Aside from Navoa's transportation money, generous people can also give toothpaste, toothbrushes, face towels, laundry soaps, bath soaps, medicines for skin diseases, diarrhea, colds, cough, asthma; chocolate powder—Milo or Ovaltine in packs; milk powder, shampoo, canned goods, plastic plates, plastic cups, sleeping mats, slippers, noodles, candies, biscuits, used clothes, and religious materials like rosaries, rosary guides, medals, brown scapulars, novenas, prayers, religious booklets, books and magazines, crucifixes and small statues, big crucifixes, statues and pictures for altars of prison cells and prison offices; green scapulars, Sacred Heart of Jesus badges, sacramentals and other religious materials. Thank you for your kindness.

Good health in 2007

When I was very sick of achalasia in 1981, it would not have mattered if I had P1 million. A beggar would have been luckier if he could eat without vomiting. Through God's mercy, I had a successful operation and could eat normally again.

But I am bent on staying healthy for the rest of my life. Dr. Rafael Castillo, my cardiologist and publisher of Health and Lifestyle magazine, has the same conviction. He put up Friendly Alliance and Media Expressions Inc. (FAME) with friends four years ago and published the magazine and another informative periodical on diabetes. They are all about staying healthy.

In his Saturday column in the Science and Health section of the PDI, he explains how you can avoid getting sick by following strict rules.

As the year ends today, I wish my readers good health in 2007 and always. I also suggest reading Castillo's magazines. Call 8135433 or 8940843 to buy the magazine.

By the way, the coffee-table book "Yena Tam Ngamin" about Our Lady of Piat is for sale, not free. Happy New Year.

New Year SPARKLERS

From page C4

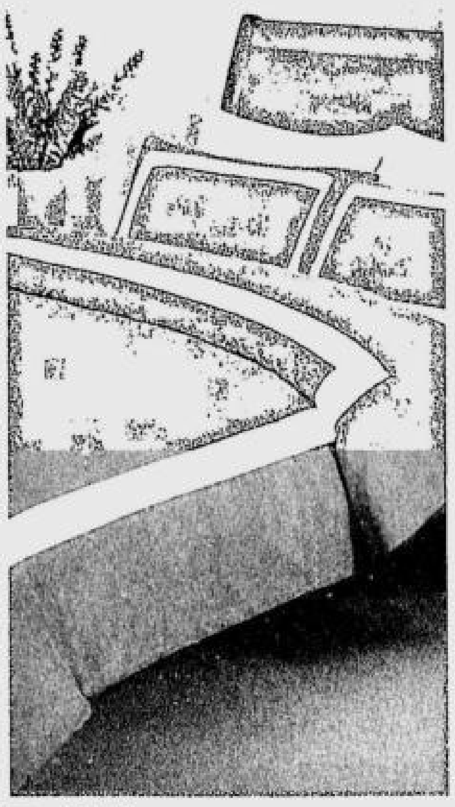
People of the year

Time Magazine nailed it when they named people who upload content and viral videos as the Time Person of the Year. Just ask anyone who has spent hours on YouTube. Local Internet users have joined in on the fun, too. Now, we no longer go to YouTube just to watch funny commercials, **Britney** montages and our favorite skits from "Mad TV" and "Saturday Night Live." We also use it to get our dose of "Bubble Gang" humor, the **Michael Fajatin** clip, **Alyssa Alano**'s unbeatable singing and the video blogs of Happy Slip.

ArtiSta Rita

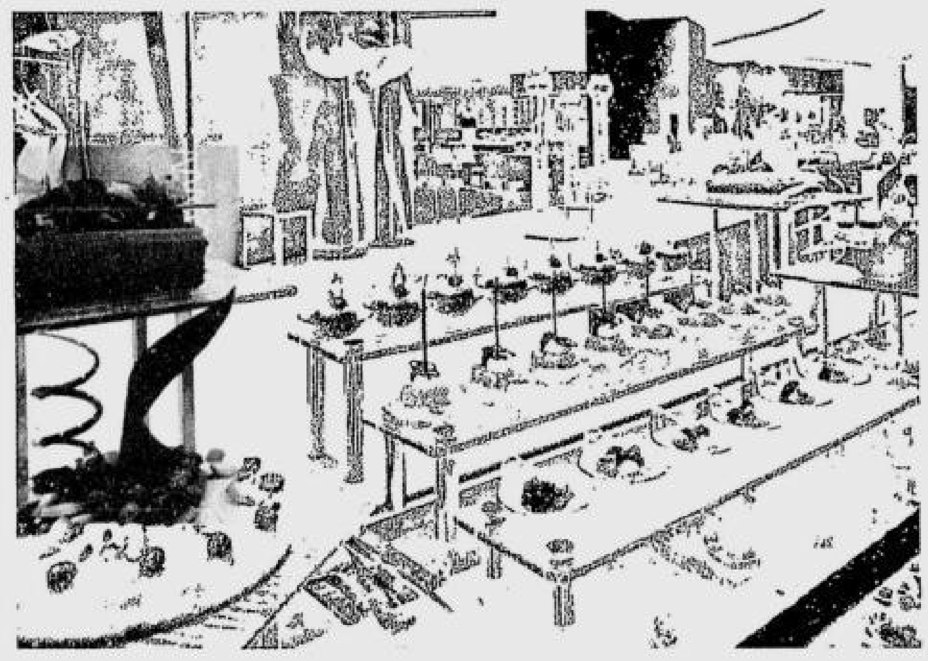
Cheers, 'cabalen'

Every Kapampangan should stand up and applaud this one. **ArtiSta Rita**, a group of young and old Pampangueños who have revived love for Kapampangan songs and pride in Kapampangan culture because of their performances, is the National Commission for Culture and Arts' Gawad Alab ng Haraya awardee for production performance. ArtiSta Rita has introduced the younger generations of Pampanga to a culture beyond "Ating Cu Pung Singsing." This was obvious at a recent concert during the Holy Family High School homecoming in Angeles City.



Bedfellows

Some local fashion designer's have followed the example of their Western counterparts with the creation of their own home lines. There's **Cesar Gaupo** who showed his houseware at Citem; **Frederick Peralta**'s bed linens for the brand Canadian at SM Homeworld; **Rajo Laurel**'s beddings for SM's Our Home. Peralta has also created a limited-edition line for a tissue-paper brand. Meanwhile, **Jojie Lloren** and **Dennis Lustico** have teamed up for a bag collection called LX2 at Rustan's Essenses. Young designers **Ivarluski Aseron** and **M Barretto** have also designed limited holiday collections for RTW brand Folded & Hung. And, of course, there's Gaupo's recently launched eponymous couture footwear.



Buffet du jour

Hotel buffets have hit it big with unique interactive cooking stations serving tasty treats from around the world. Joining the league early this year was Sofitel Philippine Plaza's Spiral. Gaining strength for its chain of food stations is Edsa Shangri-La Manila's Heat. Doing real steady for their bountiful spread are Mandarin's Paseo Uno, Makati Shangri-La's Circle and Crowne Plaza's Seven Corners. These hotel buffets bring a mélange of cuisine together to appeal to multiethnic appetites.

Back to Beijing

The national flag carrier, Philippine Airlines, resumed its direct flight to Beijing, with an ample list of excellent partner hotels to boot. Whether on a budget or on a luxurious vacation spree, the Chinese capital is more than ever accessible to many Filipinos. PAL recently received the first of its 20 brand-new single-aisle Airbus planes with 21st century-enhanced cabins.

Cable fable

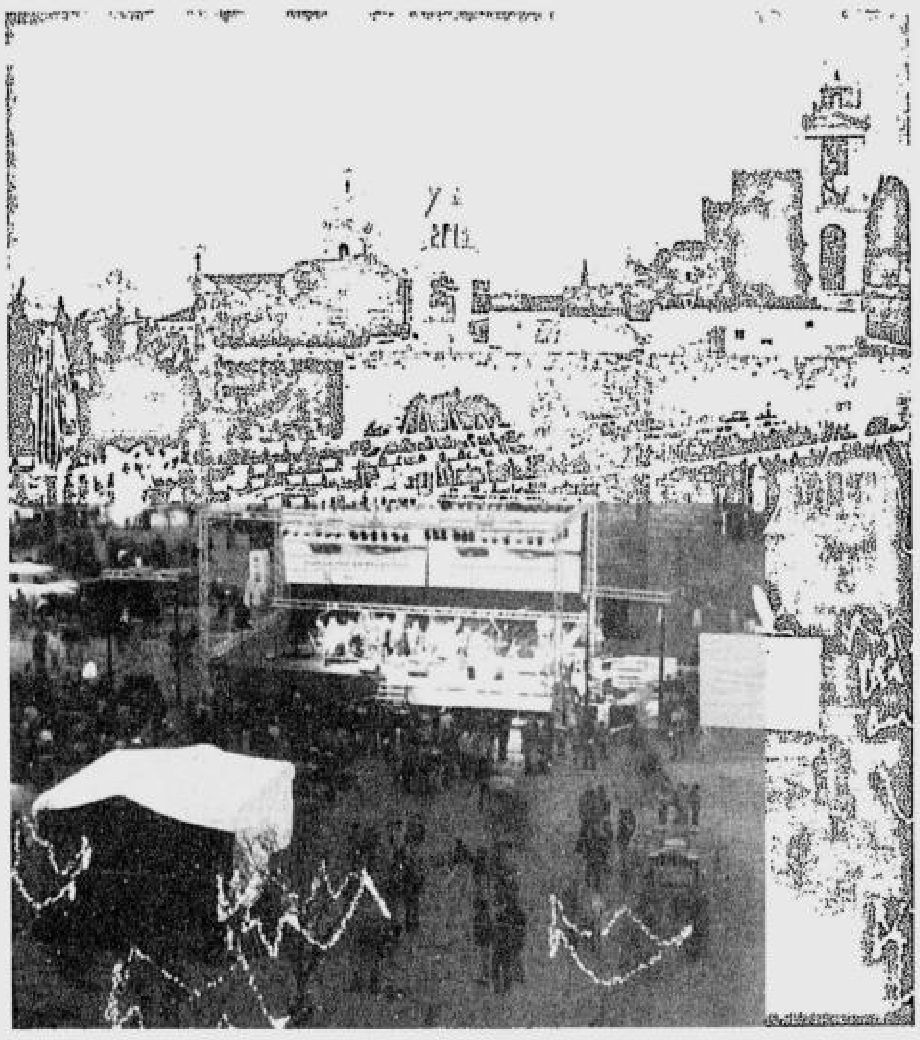
You're a cable TV subscriber and you pay a monthly subscription fee. And if you have more than one television set linked to this service, you have to pay for each additional set. But why is it that on the days when cable service is interrupted because of technical difficulties or some other reason, and you don't get to watch Jon Stewart on "The Daily Show," you don't get a rebate for non-service? You get *nada* for the emotional distress the interruption brings. One day is bearable, but two or three days are unacceptable. When there's a power blackout, consumers don't get billed for electricity they don't use, right? Right. Well, maybe not. They do get billed for extras but that's between God and Meralco.

Little big bags

Bea Valdes, whose one-of-a-kind bags first made it to the pages of fashion mag American Vogue, is expanding to London, where her precious designs will soon be sold. Buyers loved her creations during the London Fashion Week. **Tina Maristela Ocampo**, whose pricey bags are selling at upscale outlets like Barneys New York and Ikram boutique in Chicago, also landed in Vogue (December 2006).

So much for accuracy

While it was US Vogue that brought international attention to Valdes' bags and accessories, the magazine still can't seem to get the designer's name right. In the January 2007 issue, a piece on the American clothing designer **Rachel Roy**, one of the glossy's best-dressed of 2006 and an avowed fan of Valdes' "fabulously chunky necklaces," identified the Filipina as "Bea Valez." How about a little fact-checking, fabulous Vogue?



Where's Bethlehem?

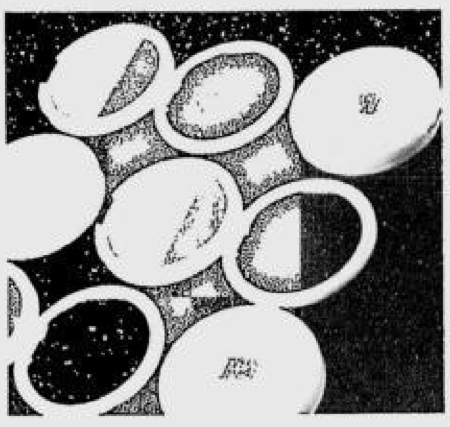
A recent survey in the United States revealed that most Americans believe Bethlehem is an Israeli town inhabited by a mixture of Jews and Muslims. Only 15 percent of Americans know that Bethlehem is a Palestinian city with a mixed Christian-Muslim community, lying in the occupied West Bank. The poll also said more than two-thirds of Americans believe Bethlehem is unsafe to visit. No wonder tourism in Bethlehem went down from one million in 2000 to 200,000 last year. This is a tragedy for any city like Bethlehem which relies on tourism for revenues.

Easy on the sugar

By 2030, the World Health Organization projects the Philippines to be the ninth country in the world with the largest diabetic population. A highly preventable medical condition, a lifestyle change—regular exercise and a healthy diet—should be on the list of Filipinos' New Year resolutions.

Body deals

Talk is going around that an actress who is currently the image model for a slimming company got the very curves she used to land this big advertising contract from the rival cosmetic surgery and medical group. In fact, one ad discloses that while other celebrities have been faithful clients of the new place for years, she is a recent recruit. These celebrity endorsers really have it good. They get free treatment at one place and once the treatment works, they turn around and get a money deal from the competition.



Rouge à la Rosas

Who says Filipinos can't do a Laura Mercier or Bobbi Brown? Top makeup artist Patrick Rosas has launched his eponymous makeup line, finally making it possible for more Filipinas to partake of that extra-special Patrick Rosas experience once affordable only to his high-society clientele. His cosmetics retail from P300-P700—a far cry from his five-figure rate for a personal service.

Back to reality

Fusion is out. It's back to traditional Filipino food as choice cuisine. Local specialties, such as *pastillas*, native rice cakes and cookies, are also getting deserved recognition. Some restaurants also give importance to the traditional way of cooking Pinoy food, such as *adobo*, *sinigang* or *tinola*.

40 questions

DJ **Mo Twister** made a comeback this year and what a comeback it is! The talk of the town is his no-holds barred radio interviews. Guests have included talent manager **Lolit Solis**, comedian **John Lapus**, singers **Geneva Cruz** and **Rachel Alejandro**. But it was Marcos grandson **Borgy Manotoc**'s guesting that created the biggest buzz because he revealed on the show that, among other things, he had slept with **Vina Morales**, **Lana Asanin** and **Victoria London**, and he thought **Sam Milby** was gay. Good for Borgy, bad for Morales and company. But how should Borgy have answered? Celebrities should keep in mind that a no-comment answer is a cop-out and they might as well not go on air.

Poor little rich girl

This young party girl turned TV personality is on the hot list of clothing stores—a few of them top fashion labels—for having sticky hands. She may look innocent but looks deceive; she is reportedly a master shoplifter. Mercifully, her family and friends have found a way of dealing with her tendencies—when she goes to the mall, she usually has a *yaya* following her around, ready to pay for whatever she decides to slip into her shopping bags.

High living

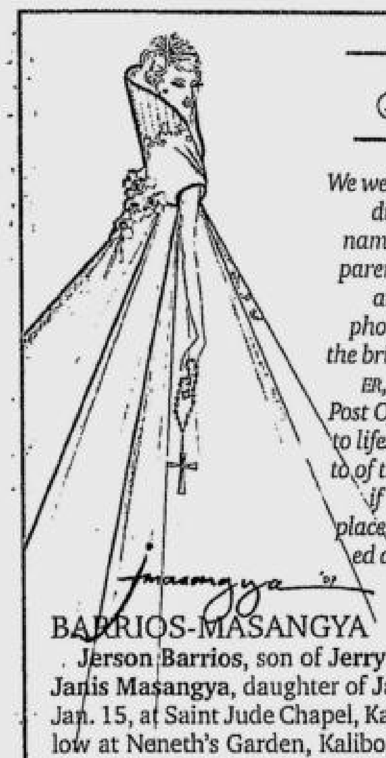
Are all real-estate developers concentrating on building condominiums and trying to sell them to Filipinos abroad? That's what it looks like today. From Makati to Marikina, the landscape is changing. Everywhere you look, there's a high-rise on the works being pre-sold at road tours in the United States, Canada, Australia and anywhere Pinoys have migrated. Retirees are being talked into selling their homes and buying condominium units. This is well and good as long as these retired folks know what they're getting into. The one thing that should be made clear to them is that there is a monthly maintenance fee that condominium owners have to pay, and pay forever and ever. They should be warned that their monthly retirement pension may not be sufficient to pay this monthly fee on top of their food, light, medical and other bills.

Amazingly brief

Pinoy fans thought the Philippines had a huge shot at winning AXN's "Amazing Race Asia"—after all, we had two teams competing in the race as opposed to most of the other countries that only had one. Alas, husband-and-wife team **Ernie** and **Jeena Lopez** and partners **Aubrey Miles** and **Jacq Yu** turned out to be the first two teams to be eliminated. What a letdown! Those might just have been the saddest two weeks for local reality TV fans.

Bargain airfares

Thanks to airlines who've slashed fares to as low as a peso—yes, one peso!—2006 was a good year for traveling Filipinos. Early on, the budget airline Tiger Airways set the trend by offering cheap air tickets to Hong Kong, Singapore and Macau. The caveat was that passengers of Tiger had to take the commute to and from Clark in Pampanga, though bargain-deal hunters didn't seem to mind. Soon after, Cebu Pacific followed suit and offered air tickets for as low as P10, P99 and P1 (exclusive of taxes and insurance fees) to select domestic and regional destinations. Air Philippines also sold P1 seats. Seair recently cut its fare prices by as much as 80 percent to celebrate its 12th anniversary. All in all a real treat for flight-footed Pinoys!



Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the INQUIRER, *P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.*

BARRIOS-MASANGYA

Jerson Barrios, son of **Jerry** and **Nancy Barrios**, will wed **Janis Masangya**, daughter of **Jaime** and **Nida Masangya**, on Jan. 15, at Saint Jude Chapel, Kalibo, Aklan. Reception will follow at Neneth's Garden, Kalibo, Aklan. The bride will wear a tent silhouette pleated gown in duchess silk by JM Collection.

MALOLOS-CARAIG

Lea N. Caraig, youngest daughter of **Florencia vda. de Caraig**, recently exchanged vows with **Llewelyn M. Malolos**, only son of **Lucito** and **Myrna Malolos**, at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Church. **John Santos** designed the bride's spaghetti-strap white serpentine gown while the entourage wore gowns in canary, apple-green and tangerine. Reception was at Our Lady of the Valley Pavillion.

REYES-PANAGSAGAN

Ellen Panagsagan, daughter of Eliseo and **Lilia Panagsagan**, recently tied the knot with **Gil Reyes**, son of **Exequiel Reyes Jr.** and **Lucila Gagne**, in a Christian ceremony at the Mutya Room of the Sulo Hotel. Wedding coordinator was **Egay Altavano** of MyEvents.com.

MORTIZ-ANGELES

TV director **Frasco Mortiz**, son of actor/director **Edgar** and **Millette (nee Santos) Mortiz**, will wed **Ellen Angeles**, daughter of **Elias** and **Zenaida** (deceased) **Angeles**, on Jan. 4. Fr. **Jerry Orbos** will officiate at the ceremony at Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati. Reception will follow at The Crowne Plaza in Ortigas. The bridal gown and the groom's suit are original creations of **Paul Cabral**. Event management is by Visions and Ideas.

New Year SPARKLERS

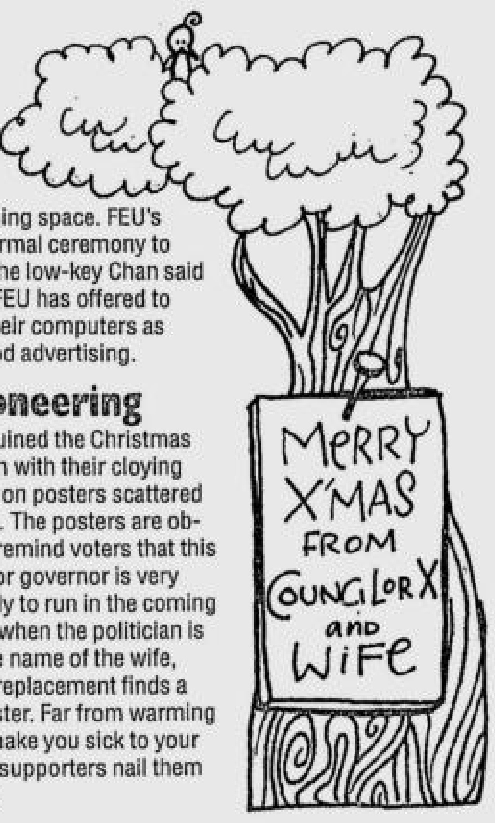
You've told us you miss the thumbs so here they are again, pointing up as in cheers or down as in jeers. This being New Year's Eve, you're entitled to some sparklers, even fireworks. May 2007 bring you the lifestyle your heart desires

University Bench

Even before "Milenyo" destroyed most billboards in the city, entrepreneur **Ben Chan** willingly gave up his strategically located billboard advertising for Bench in the University Belt. The billboard was, at certain angles, blocking the passersby's sight of the Far Eastern University campus, recipient of the prestigious Unesco 2005 Asia Pacific Cultural Heritage Awards for its restored Art Deco buildings. FEU had first requested the outdoor advertising company to relocate the billboard elsewhere but the request was ignored. Luckily, Bench came to the rescue. The popular clothing company stopped renting the advertising space. FEU's trustees wanted to hold a formal ceremony to thank Bench but, as usual, the low-key Chan said there was no need for one. FEU has offered to install Bench's logo on all their computers as screensaver. Now that's good advertising.

Season's electioneering

Politicians have ruined the Christmas season once again with their cloying holiday greetings on posters scattered all over the metro. The posters are obviously meant to remind voters that this councilor or congressman or governor is very much around and most likely to run in the coming elections. You can tell, too, when the politician is on his last term because the name of the wife, sister, brother, or anointed replacement finds a place somewhere in the poster. Far from warming the heart, these greetings make you sick to your stomach. Worse, mindless supporters nail them onto living, breathing trees.



Photoshopped beauty

Here's a story of yet another young actress gone bold. Photos of **Angelica Panganiban** in different swimsuits were plastered on calendars of one liquor brand. She looked good, no doubt. Almost too good even. Weeks later, behind-the-scenes photos started making the e-mail rounds, implying that in this hi-tech world pictures do lie and Photoshop might just be the best extreme makeover tool around.

NEW YEAR/ C3

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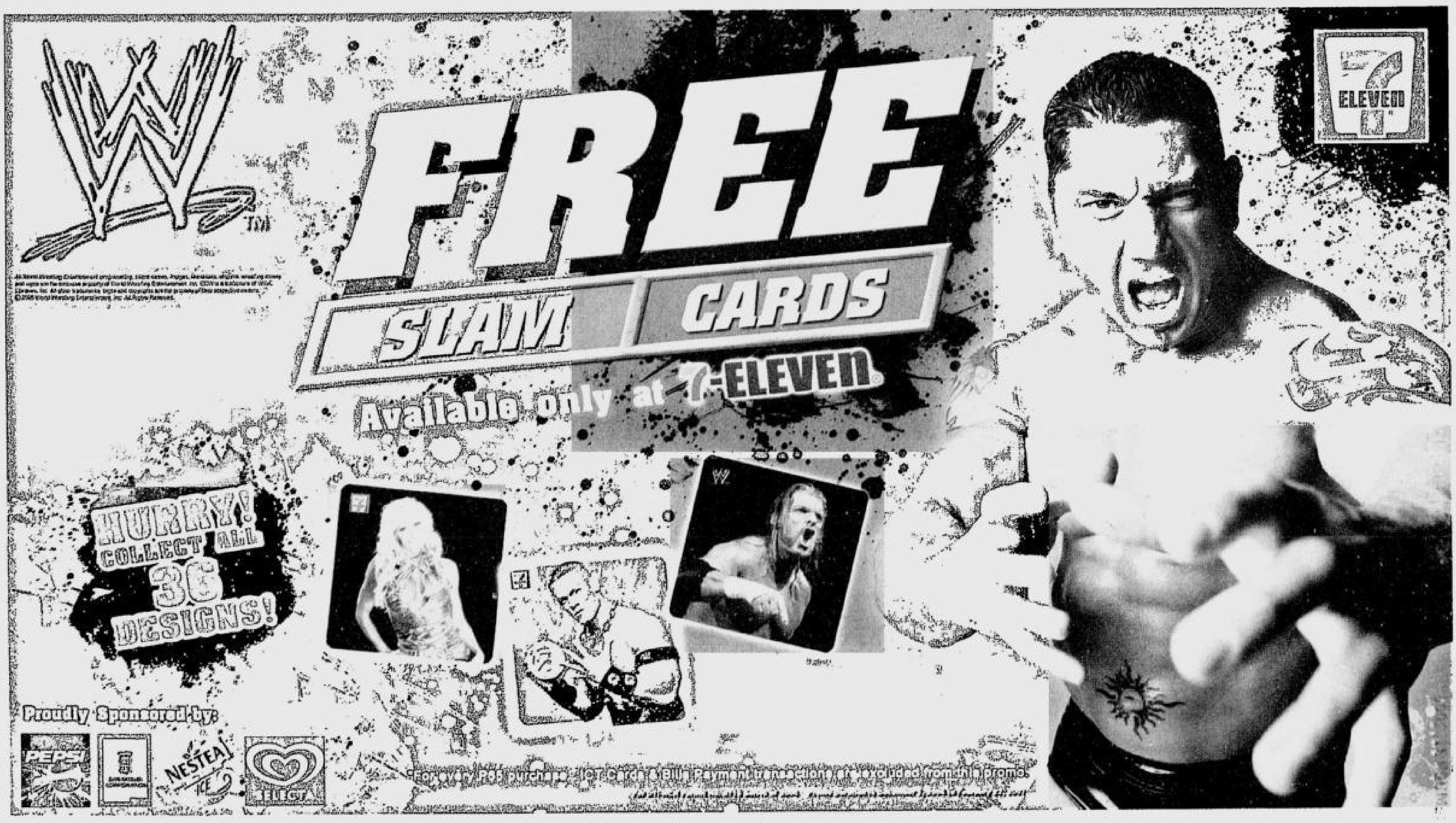
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Most fascinating interviews of 2006, Part 2

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

LOS ANGELES—HERE'S wishing one and all a strife-free 2007.

For sending feedback all year round, I thank the readers. Your comments motivate me to keep writing.

In June, I broke my right arm. Call me crazy, but I did not miss a single deadline even if I was hospitalized for three days and I couldn't type for weeks. I dictated my column to my wife, Janet, who still does a funny imitation of me when I wore a brace on my arm and struggled to get in and out of bed (otherwise a simple thing—ah, the things we take for granted!), that I myself found it hilarious even though I was gritting my teeth.

Despite this incident, I bid adieu to 2006 with fondness because I received so many blessings, especially the miracle of my speedy recovery—perhaps motivated by my desire to be able to drive again (I missed mobility the most). I'll write more about this period someday.

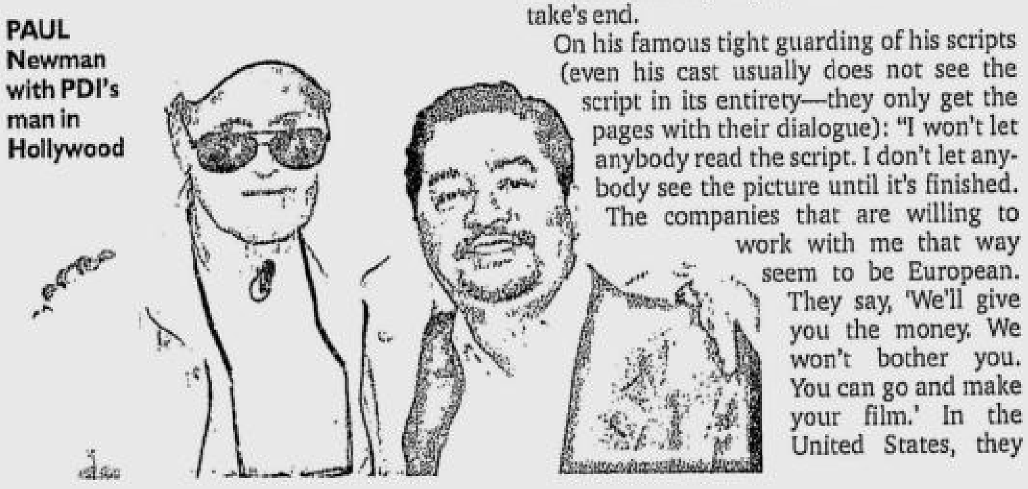
My last column for this year is, fittingly, the conclusion of my list of 2006's most fascinating interviewees. I don't mean to sound jaded, but there are Hollywood stars whose patter makes me study the patterns on a carpet.

The stars on this list held my interest and kept me from gazing at other things.

Paul Newman

At 81, **Paul Newman** looked frail when he walked into the media room of the Lowe's Motor Speedway in North Carolina but, as the cliché goes, looks are deceiving. After our press con with one of Hollywood's statesmen, he suited up and took to the track. A little hard of hearing now, Paul was an engrossing mixture of pluck and humility.

Asked to name the five most pressing issues in the world, Paul replied: "I hate to have that question thrown at me because there might be 15 other things and I haven't quite put them in order and had a chance to think. But ... obviously, the environment is critical. The Mideast is critical. Government of the people, by the people and for the people is critical and it's something that I don't think we have in this country right now. Let me leave the last two blank ... but if I had to ... poverty, safe drinking water throughout the world and the AIDS epidemic."



PAUL Newman with PDI's man in Hollywood

Cate Blanchett

We dare proclaim her the most elegant of all the actresses today. She mesmerizes us not only in the way she appears in interviews (always in stylish clothes that complement her long-legged model looks) but also in how refined she speaks and carries herself.

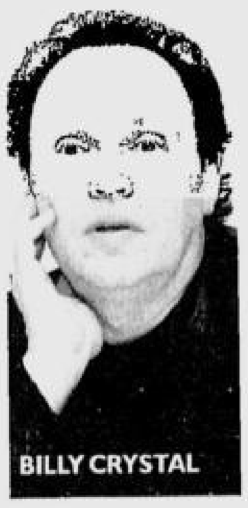
On the coming film "I'm Not There" where she is one of the thespians playing **Bob Dylan**: "Todd Haynes who co-wrote and directed the film has said that it's not a bio pic in any sense of the word. It's basically dividing Dylan's persona into about six different characters. You juxtapose all those different characters, each of whom has a name that has nothing to do with Bob Dylan. Maybe we'll get close to understanding the mystique of Dylan. I play a version of him when he went electric."

Does the following guarantee that she'll not spread index cards in front of us when she gets older? "It's very easy to assume that just because people are asking if you want a cup of tea as you're getting make-up put on, the camera's pointing at you and people are asking if you want a chair, that you're more important than anyone else in the room. When you win something, it's not that you're any better than anyone else. It's just because you got maybe one-and-a-half more votes than someone else."

Woody Allen

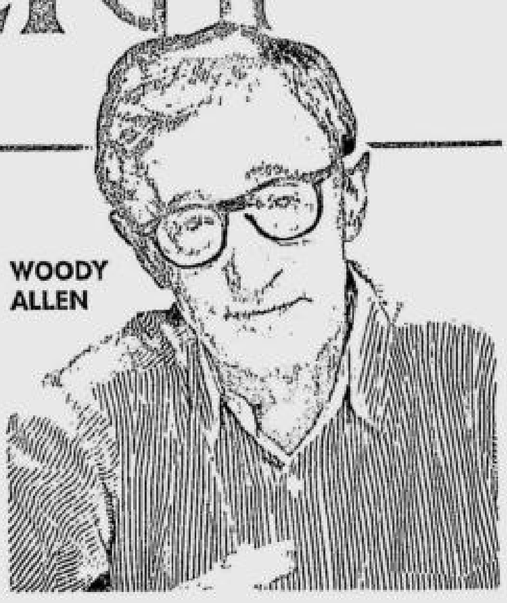
When we flew to London to take up Woody's unprecedented invitation to talk to him on the location of his then untitled movie (the **Colin Farrell-Ewan McGregor** starrer is now called "Cassandra's Dream"), we discovered that Woody does not yell "Action!" or "Cut!" Instead, a crew member yells "Rolling!" and then the acclaimed director/actor merely says, "OK" to indicate a take's end.

On his famous tight guarding of his scripts (even his cast usually does not see the script in its entirety—they only get the pages with their dialogue): "I won't let anybody read the script. I don't let anybody see the picture until it's finished. The companies that are willing to work with me that way seem to be European. They say, 'We'll give you the money. We won't bother you. You can go and make your film.' In the United States, they give you the money but they want to look at the script. They want to know who's in it. They like to be your partner in some way. I don't want them to be my partner."



BILLY CRYSTAL

FORREST WHITAKER



WOODY ALLEN

Meryl Streep

The Great One impressed us with her singing in "A Prairie Home Companion" (after giving us a devil of a fun time in the Cineplex with her icy editor, **Miranda Priestly**). Is there anything she cannot do? Meryl told us, "There are many things I can't do anymore, just by virtue of my age. I do think women are held to a different standard. I've watched this movie ['The Devil Wears Prada'] several times. The second time, I imagined a man in my character, who is maybe 6'2" tall, nice-looking, graying hair, delivering the lines almost exactly the same way that my character did—and there would be absolutely nothing offensive. Women have to wrap their requests in a special package. In my observation, male directors don't have to do that."

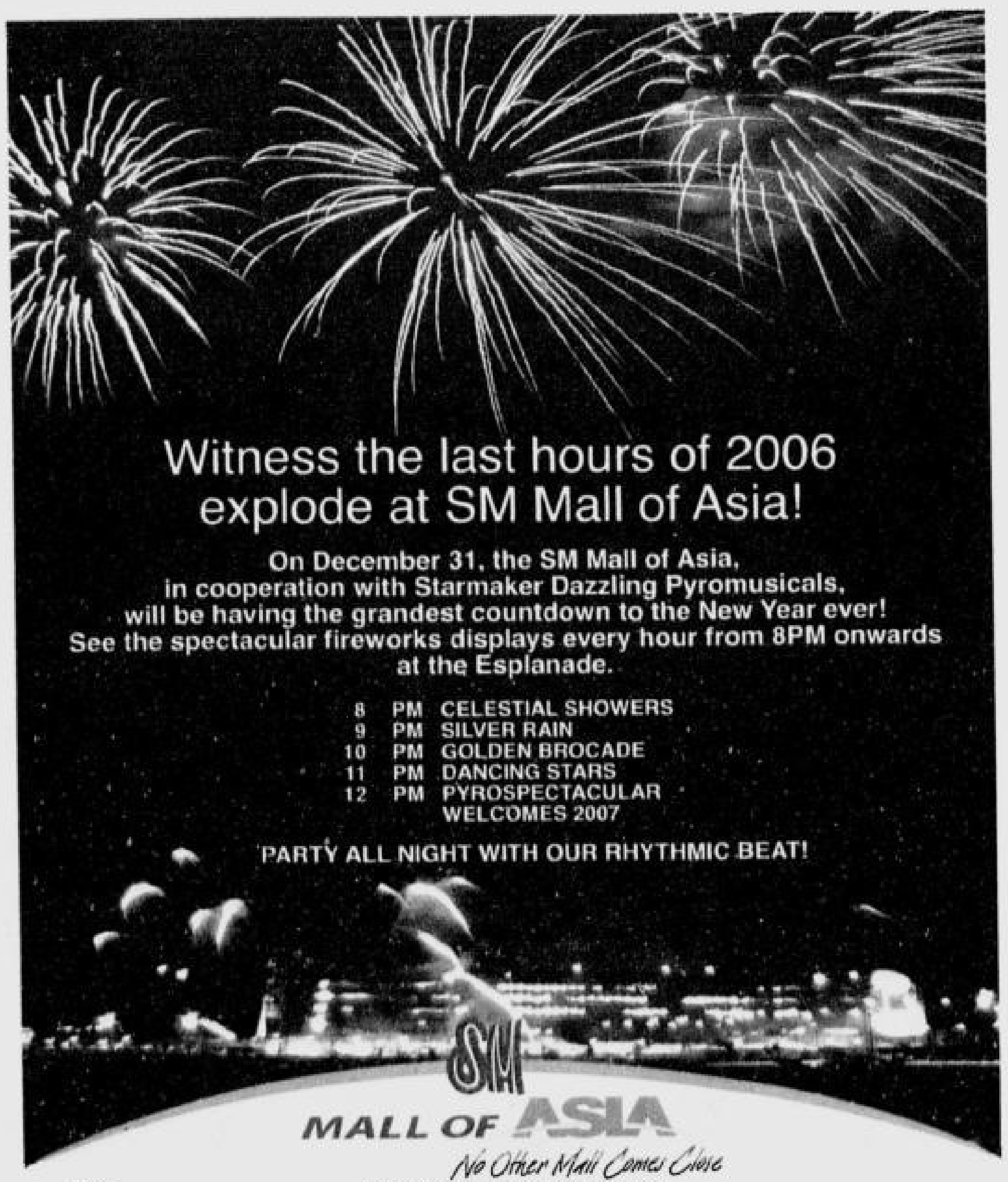
MERYL STREEP

Oliver Stone

The director said he had just been to the Philippines when we congratulated him on the 20th anniversary of the release of "Platoon," which was shot in Cavite. The milestone was celebrated with a special showing of the film in Cannes last May.

On whether moviegoers would appreciate his "World Trade Center" purely as a human story, separate it from its political aspects: "That's a valid question ... because the [9/11]

MOST/D2



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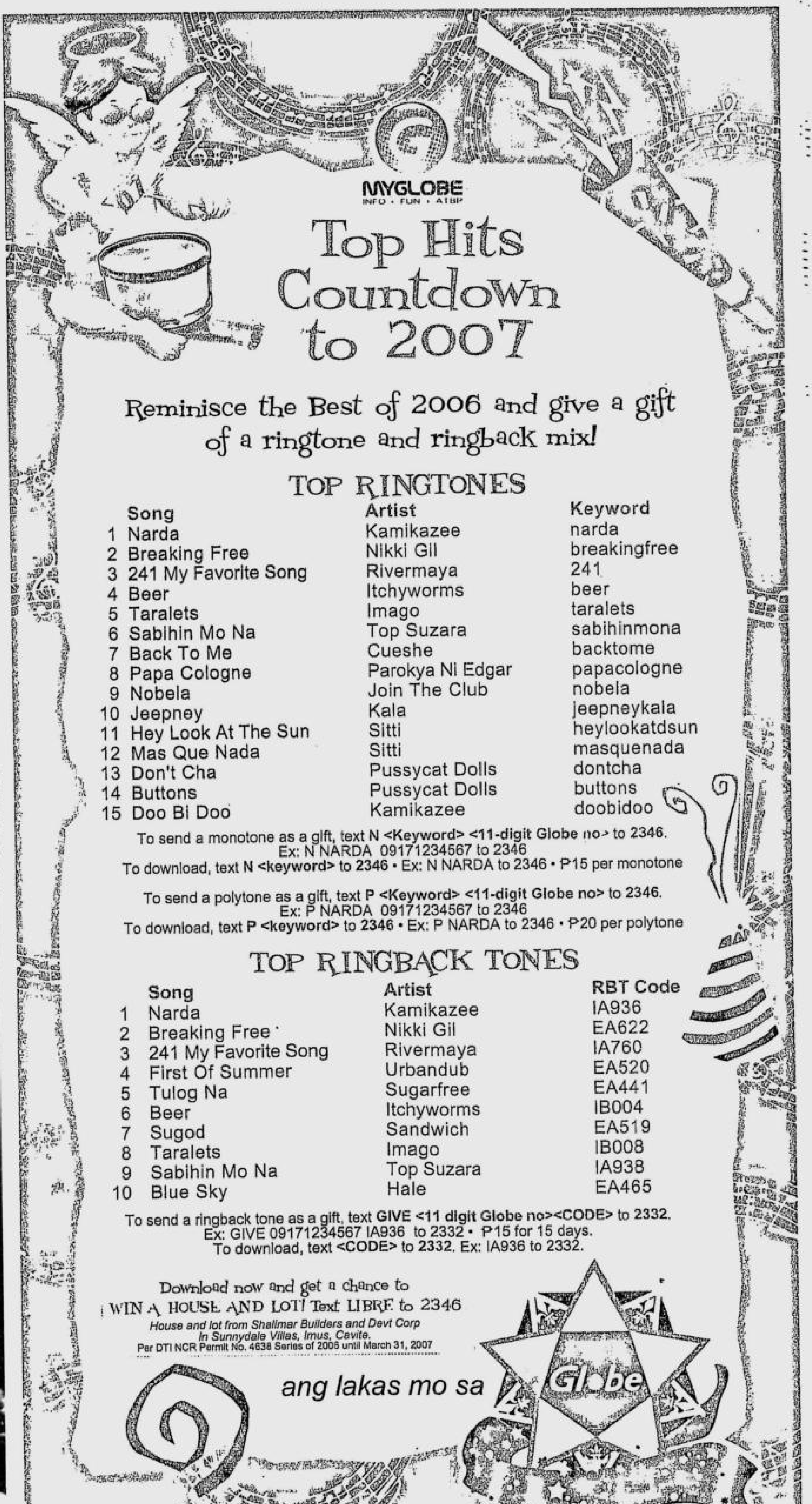

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	Song	Artist	Keyword
1	Narda	Kamikazee	narda
2	Breaking Free	Nikki Gil	breakingfree
3	241 My Favorite Song	Rivermaya	241
4	Beer	Itchyworms	beer
5	Taralets	Imago	taralets
6	Sabihin Mo Na	Top Suzara	sabihinmona
7	Back To Me	Cueshe	backtome
8	Papa Cologne	Parokya Ni Edgar	papacologne
9	Nobela	Join The Club	nobela
10	Jeepney	Kala	jeepneykala
11	Hey Look At The Sun	Sitti	heylookatdsun
12	Mas Que Nada	Sitti	masquenada
13	Don't Cha	Pussycat Dolls	dontcha
14	Buttons	Pussycat Dolls	buttons
15	Doo Bi Doo	Kamikazee	doobidoo

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	Song	Artist	RBT Code
1	Narda	Kamikazee	IA936
2	Breaking Free	Nikki Gil	EA622
3	241 My Favorite Song	Rivermaya	IA760
4	First Of Summer	Urbandub	EA520
5	Tulog Na	Sugarfree	EA441
6	Beer	Itchyworms	IB004
7	Sugod	Sandwich	EA519
8	Taralets	Imago	IB008
9	Sabihin Mo Na	Top Suzara	IA938
10	Blue Sky	Hale	EA465

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Most fascinating . . .

From page D1

was so politicized that the whole world has been [equally] politicized. The United States told its allies, 'You're with us or you're against us.' That's a very cowboy point of view. Audiences could bring their ideology to the movie but it's not about that. It's about that day only, and it should make you demythologize the event."

Colin Farrell

Late last year, the Irish actor did very little—almost none—press exposure for his films. The official explanation was that **Colin**, known for his partying and drinking ways, had checked himself into a treatment center for exhaustion and dependency on prescription medication.

Colin finally faced reporters for "Miami Vice." Explaining that the time off allowed him "to take a kind of metaphorical deep breath," Colin looked several pounds heavier. When Colin dropped lines like "I have found a love that I never thought I'd find through my son," you'd just wish the actor, who turned 30 this year, would henceforth run into less trouble (he's had his share of lawsuits, sex video scandals, etc.).

"I have a newfound appreciation for life. I never had that much of a will to live a long time. I was enjoying life as I went through it but I never really had much of a reason to look beyond the next step. Now, I want to be alive to watch my son grow, be his friend and his father and hang around with him."

THE COLUMNIST here with Martin Scorsese

Rinko Kikuchi

A virtually unknown Japanese actress until "Babel" came along, **Rinko Kikuchi** is the hottest breakthrough performer this year along with Jennifer Hudson ("Dreamgirls"). As we predicted, Rinko has earned Best Supporting Actress nominations for her exceptional portrayal of a deaf-mute girl lost in Tokyo.

Looking younger than her actual age, 25 (that's why she's credible as a high school student), Rinko replied through an interpreter seated beside her. She spoke in a soft, quiet voice and tended to look down.

On her nude scene in "Babel": "To me, that was the most important scene in the movie. My character ... wants to be touched ... she feels it's the only way to hold on to something. She's very sexual. (Nudity) is her way of expressing herself. I didn't have any problem doing that scene."

Forest Whitaker

He is terrifying as the despot Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland" but in person, he is a mild-mannered man. When we told Forest in Toronto that the movie reminded us of the late Philippine President **Ferdinand Marcos'** martial law regime, he said some scenes reminded him, too, of the Philippines. He explained that he had just arrived in the country to do "Platoon" at the height of the People Power revolution that brought down Marcos' rule.

"I arrived on the day Cory Aquino came to power. I saw all these people flashing the V sign." There is a scene like this in "The Last King." Forest recalled that he was billeted at The Mandarin Hotel but felt safer staying with some students involved in "Platoon." So he moved to "a house in Balic-Balic." Imagine our surprise to hear him say that!

Martin Scorsese

"The Departed" filmmaker answers questions enthusiastically, and with a smile as constant as his black-framed glasses and bushy eyebrows, plus a rich, hearty laughter.

Told that several of the actors working with him for the first time expressed awe at how quiet it could be on a **Scorsese** movie set, he explained: "I do ask for everyone to be as quiet as possible. One can't imagine the noise on a set—building, sawing, banging, people talking ... I allow that for a while but, at a certain point, I simply have to get it quiet so I can converse with the director of photography and, particularly, the actors."

Will Ferrell

When **Will** sat down to discuss "Stranger than Fiction," his important film this year, he spoke softly. But somewhere in his deadpan replies to questions, he casually inserted lines like, "During my time in prison ..." (he was never in jail) and "Now that I'm married, I'm kind of thinking about going gay ..."

On where his delightfully absurd sense of humor comes from: "I grew up in very safe, suburban Orange County—in Irvine. My theory is that there was nothing to do and I had no real issues in my life so it just allowed me to make fun of stuff in my head."

Jennifer Hudson

Looking glam in a black dress, leopard print shoes and her long hair in stylish curls, the "American Idol" finalist has undergone a makeover befitting her new sta-

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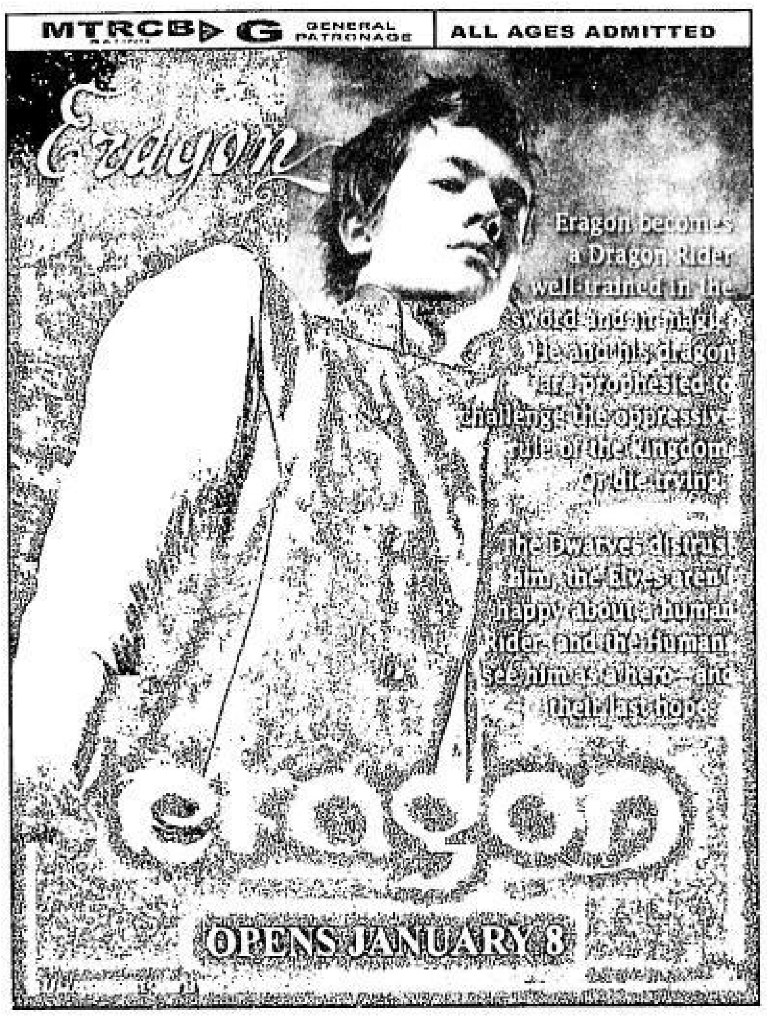

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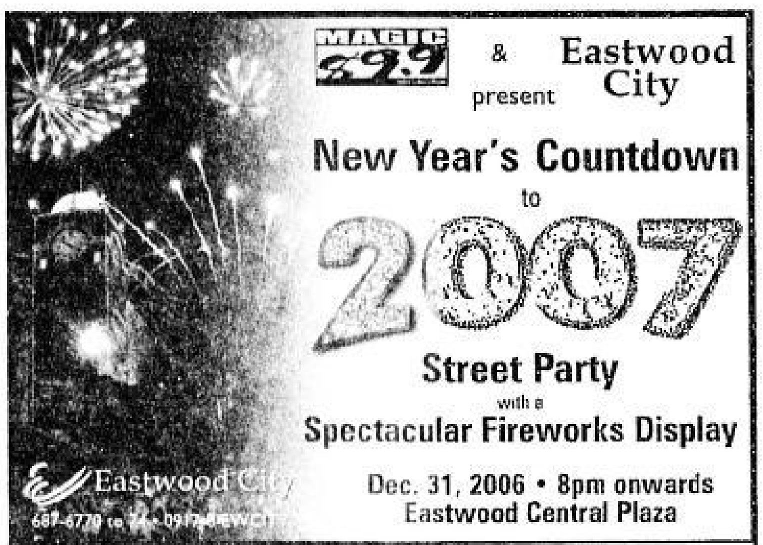

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3	ENTENG KABISOTE 3	12:50, 3:15, 5:50, 8:25	G
4	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8	1:35, 4:30, 7:25	PG-13

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Also making it to our annual list of most engaging interviewees are Angelina Jolie, whom we just profiled last week

tus as a heavy favorite in the Best Supporting actress race in this awards season. All thanks to her sensational performance as Effie White in "Dreamgirls."

More about our interview with Jennifer in a coming column.

Jack Nicholson

Wearing his trademark dark glasses and that grin (or smirk, depending on how you look at it), **Jack** was in a mood to talk one afternoon in LA. "My answers are very long," he admitted. "I've been up in my house alone for a while so I'm a bit talkative."

"A bit talkative" was an understatement. The winner of three Oscars and five Golden Globes gave such a long answer to my question on turning 70 in April that I was afraid his reply would take up the whole time allotted to the press con. "I'm never finished," he quipped to one reporter who had asked if he was done replying to her question.

"Physical and sexual vitality is one of the reasons that I'm lively. I noticed the other day that the LA Times agreed with me—more sex, not less, as you get older."

Billy Crystal

How many people can claim that they saw their first movie as a kid with the late great jazz singer **Billie Holiday**? Billy can. Not only did he watch a western with the music legend; he also sat on her lap. This was one of the revelations in Billy's autobiographical one-man show, "700 Sundays," which we caught on its LA stop.

"Kurt Vonnegut came to the show in New York—I am dropping a huge name. He came backstage and started talking to me about the music of the show, not the actual music. He kept saying this is like a symphony to him. At the end he turned around, came back and said while pointing at me, 'Border Collie.' I said what? He said, 'You're a Border Collie.' I said what does that mean. He said, 'You keep barking at us and you get us all into the corral. I've never seen anything like that.' He walked away and kept muttering 'Border Collie.'"

Mel Gibson

In the actor-director's first major press conference since his arrest last July for speeding and drunk driving—when he reportedly screamed anti-Jewish slurs—he got our vote for the year's most tense and uncomfortable interviewee. As he discussed his new film, the violent "Apocalypto," among other things, **Mel** rolled and folded a paper napkin so many times that it became a tiny roll of paper.

On how he is doing since that July incident that landed him in the headlines: "I'm good, I'm good. You know, as balanced as I'm going to get—which is just a little off center, I'd say. Life is a process of learning about yourself, others, and many things that perhaps you haven't contemplated before. We're full of flaws, anxieties, fears."

Clint Eastwood

At 76, **Clint** made not one, but two films on the battle of Iwo Jima—one from an American perspective ("Flags of our Fathers") and from a Japanese point of view ("Letters from Iwo Jima"). Both are good but we prefer the latter—it's a personal, intimate account of battle and less didactic.

"I think what we're trying to tell in these two movies is that at best, war is a futile exercise," he said. "I would like to live the rest of my life without wars but I probably said that at age 15."

MOST/D5

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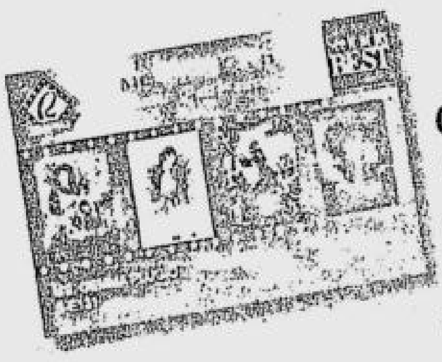

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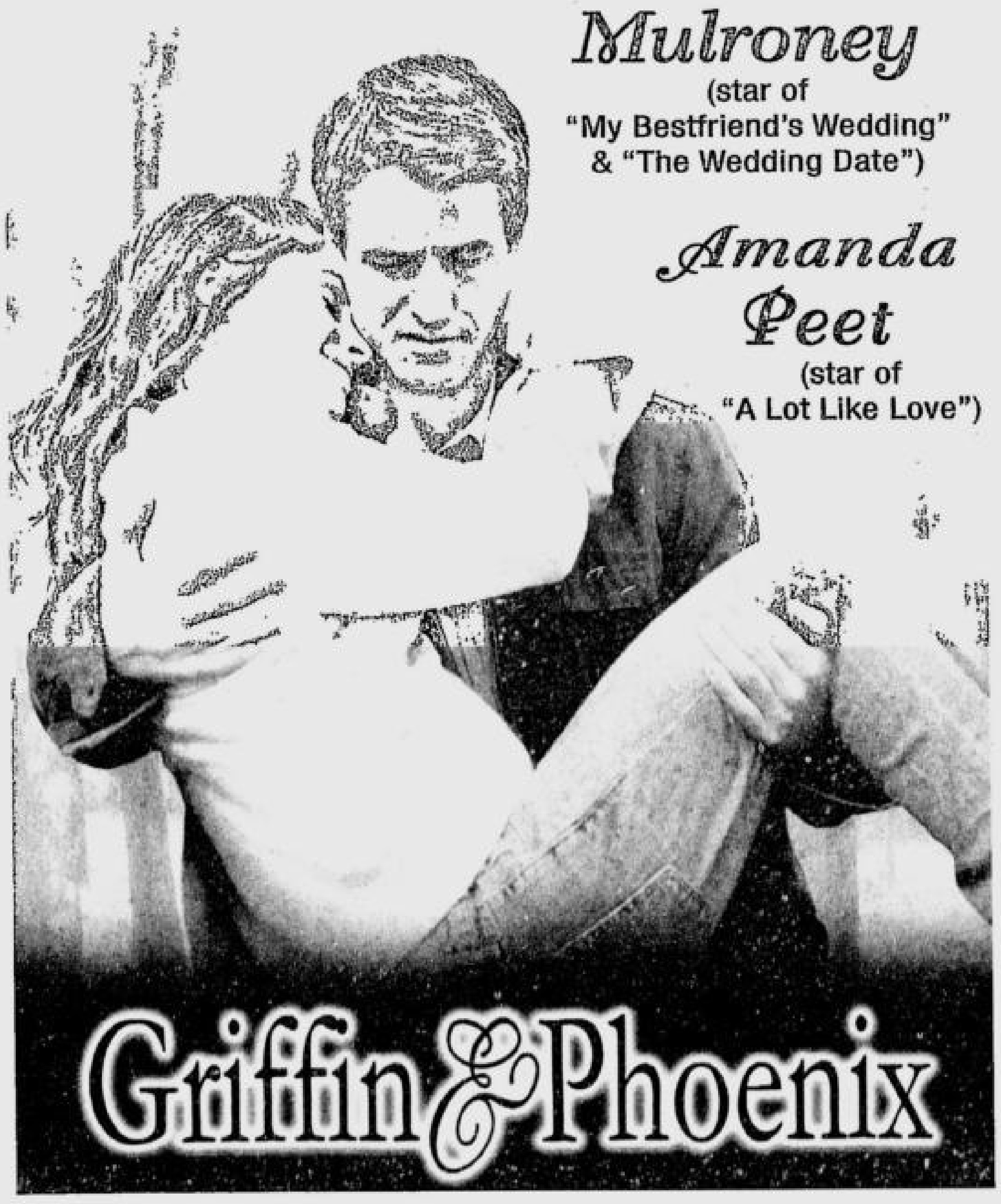
Per DTI-NCR Permit #5517, Series of 2006

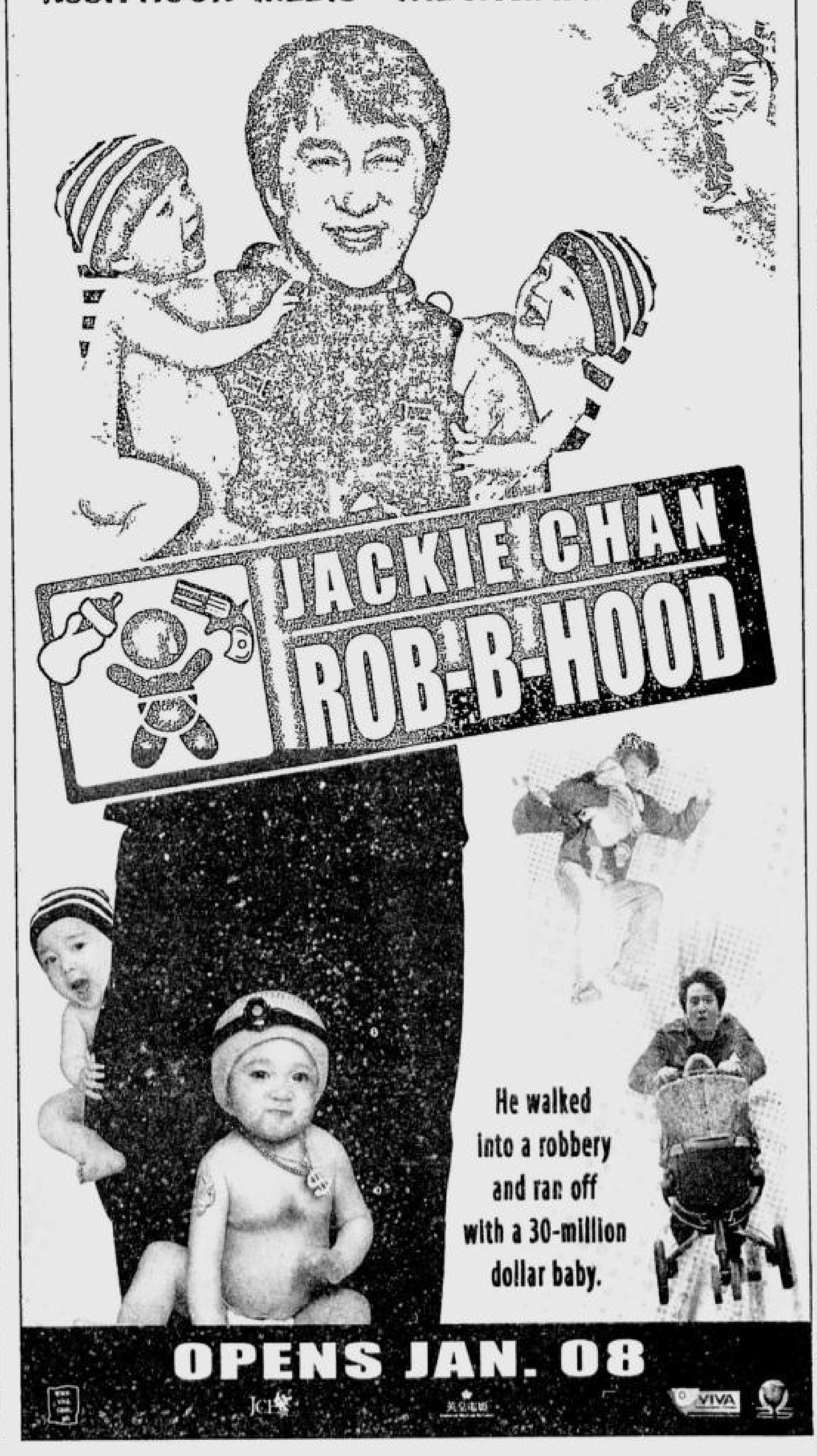
OPENS JANUARY 8!
IN THE TRADITION OF "IF ONLY" &
"A WALK TO REMEMBER" COMES ANOTHER
MOVIE THAT TOUCHES THE HEART AND
MAKES YOU BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF LOVE

LOVE NEVER DIES
IT IS STRONGER THAN DEATH

Dermont Mulroney
(star of "My Bestfriend's Wedding" & "The Wedding Date")
Amanda Peet
(star of "A Lot Like Love")



"RUSH HOUR" MEETS "THE PACIFIER"



JACKIE CHAN
ROB-B-HOOD
He walked into a robbery and ran off with a 30-million dollar baby.
OPENS JAN. 08
VIVA

Shang Makati's New Year countdown concert stars Pops

SHOW TIME

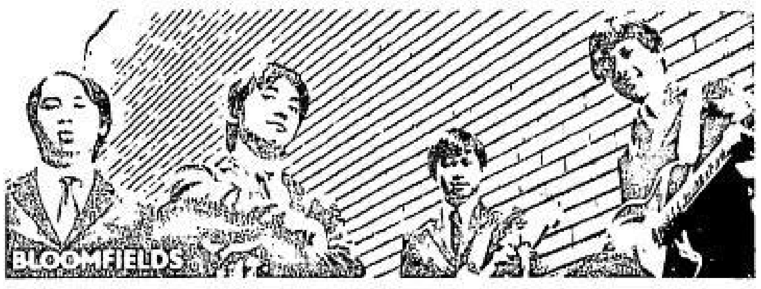
POPS FERNANDEZ USHERS IN 2007 WITH A countdown concert dubbed "Champagne Pops" at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel Lobby tonight from 10:45 till midnight. Her special guest is R&B Prince Jay-R.

The concert is a first in Pops' long career. "I've never done a New Year's Eve countdown before," she says. "I'm usually on vacation or out of town with my family and kids."

Pops will be doing "a lot of fast, celebration-type songs from the '70s and '80s—never a slow or dull moment, that's for sure."

As for Jay-R, she says he's "one of the most soulful performers in the circuit today." They have done a couple of shows in the US. "We work pretty well together," Pops says.

POPS FERNANDEZ


BLOOMFIELDS

Pyro-musical show

SM Mall of Asia presents a choreographed fireworks show tonight, provided exclusively by the pyrotechnics company Starmaker.

The display starts at 7 p.m. and goes on every hour, on the hour. At midnight, the show begins. Singer Kim Flores will also perform.

Holidays at Boulvar

Boulvar at the Manila Pavilion presents the Major Impact tonight at 9. Call 526-1212.

Retro Countdown

The Bellevue's Retro Countdown Party tonight stars The Bloomfields. The band takes audiences back to the swinging '60s. Call 771 8181.

Special at Merk's

Merk's Bar Bistro's own countdown concert features Aretha and the Souled Out Band. Call 757-4720.

Also tonight

RJ with **Mitch Valdez** at the Baguio Country Club

January 3

Jojo A with **Midnight Connection** at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

'Starstruck' 20: SWOT profiles

From page D6

O—determination to be a star; T—gossip.

RICH ASUNCION, 17, of Bohol won a college scholarship when she was crowned Miss Tagbilaran. She believes life can be hard, but that she can survive through perseverance. S—dancing; W—singing; O—chance at becoming an actress; T – Stef.

PRINCE STEFAN, 17, of Iloilo wants to become a recording artist and dreams of doing a duet with Regine Velasquez. He claims his father is a prince from Saudi Arabia, whom his mother met when she worked there. S—singing, dancing, acting; W—acting; O—sees himself as an actor someday; T—losing his confidence to compete.

ALJUR ABRENICA, 16, is from Pampanga. He has been named by most of the survivors as a threat. He is a varsity basketball player and the vocalist of a school band. S—singing, dancing; W—acting; O—sees success as a singer or an actor; T—future of his family depends on him.

STEF PRESCOTT, 16, grew up in the United States but speaks fluent Filipino, which impressed "Starstruck" council member Lorna Tolentino. She describes as strong-willed and willing to give everything to be in show biz. S—personality and determination; W—her accent; O—can't say yet; T—other contestants who, she says, are all beautiful, talented and as determined as she is.

DAVE VALENTINO, 20, looks like Sam Milby, whom he has yet to meet. "He casts a pretty long shadow, but I'm not trying to be him ... I'd rather be appreciated as myself." Dave has been a recording artist in the US, having cut a record for a small record label. S—his diversity; W—Tagalog; O—get to know Pinoy culture and prove he's not a Sam Milby copycat; T—being labeled a Milby wannabe.

HAZEL UY, 17, is studying to be an engineer at the University of San Carlos in Cebu. While performing her song number for the press, Hazel's microphone was off but she finished it. Then she sang it again without accompaniment during the Q&A portion with the media. S—composes songs and is very spiritual; W—being overpowered by competition; O—sees recognition as a singer; T—Stef.

LIZZY PECSON, 19, of Pampanga, is one of the prettiest in this batch. She is not afraid to fail, saying, "It's not failure that hurts but knowing that you did not give your best." S—faith in God; W—adverse criticisms; O—meeting other people; T—myself.

KRIS BERNAL, 17, of Quezon City has appeared on the cover of a magazine. She is a freshman at the Trinity College, where she indulges in theater activities. S—her mom's support; W—negative thinkers; O—sees herself a future superstar; T—intrigues.

JESI CORCUERA, 16, is proud to be gay. She says she found out she was gay at age 11. She loves to play computer games and dreams of becoming an actress. S—being gay; W—being gay; O—lots; T—more talented contestants.

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Kasal Kasali Kasalo

The saying "opposites attract" come true when a tomboy (Judy Ann Santos) falls in love with a boy next door (Ryan Agoncillo). When the two decided to get married, meddling in-laws come into picture. Watch how the soon-to-be married couple resolves the hilarious family dispute in this modern day love story.

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6:10PM 7:25PM Admission Fee- P200
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1:30PM
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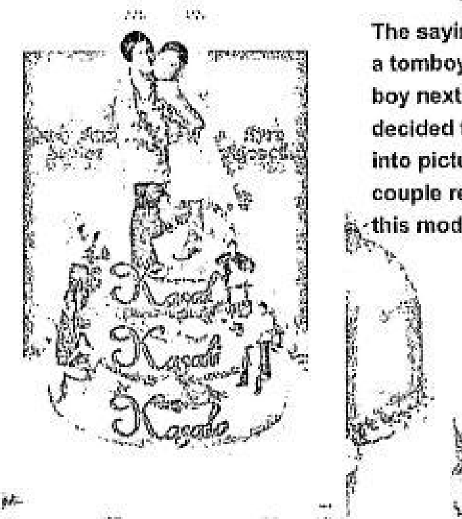
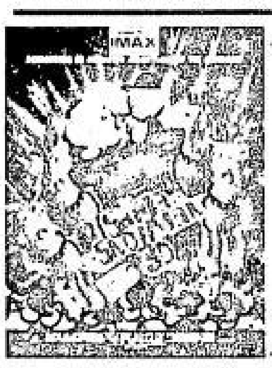
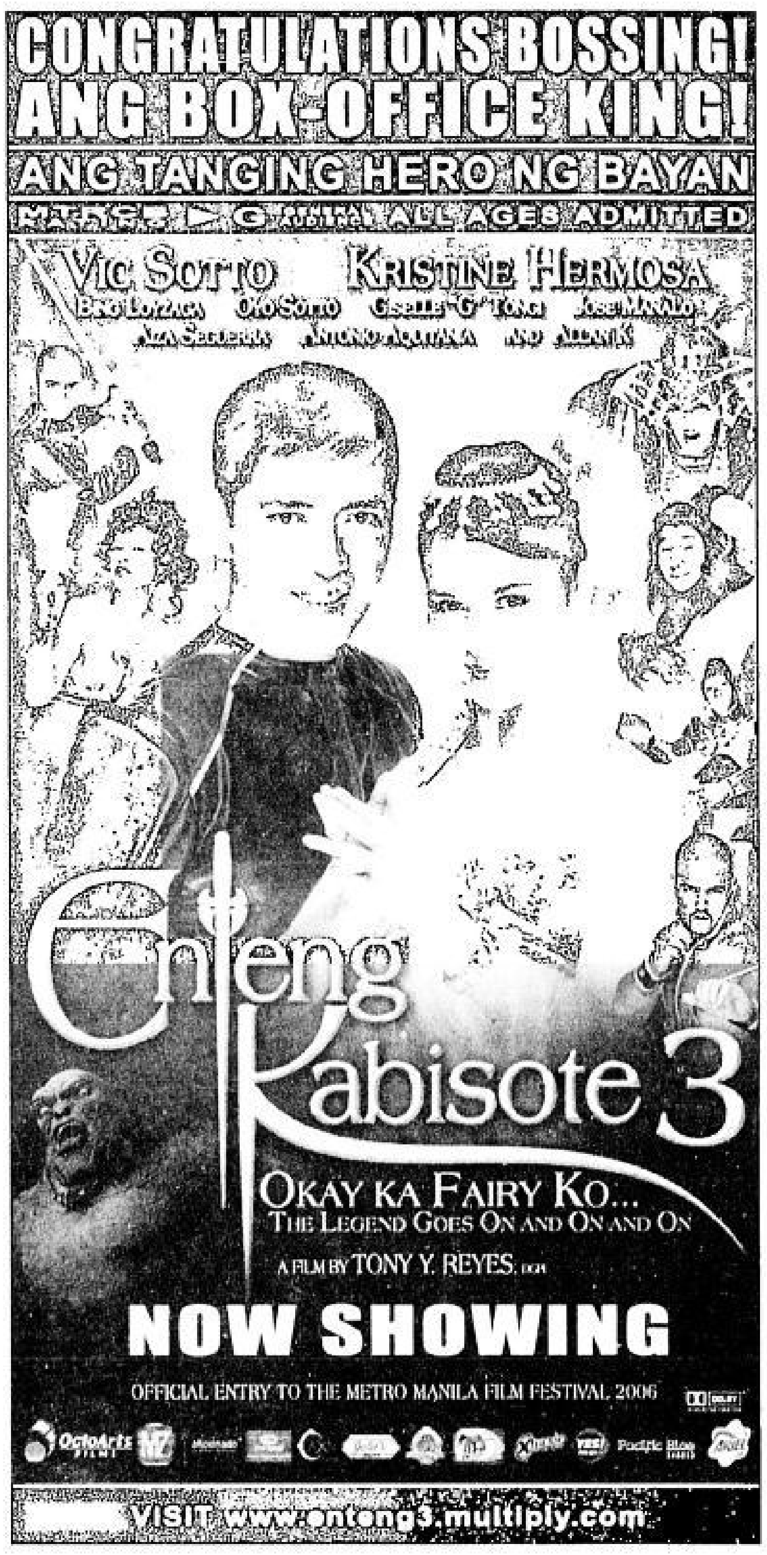
Promo Period: December 25, 2006 to January 7, 2007
Grand Draw: January 13, 2007
*Also valid at SM Mall of Asia Cinema, The Podium Cinema and The Block Cinema (SM City North EDSA). See posters for more details.

SM CINEMA
Per DTI NCR Permit No 9517 Series of 2006
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA



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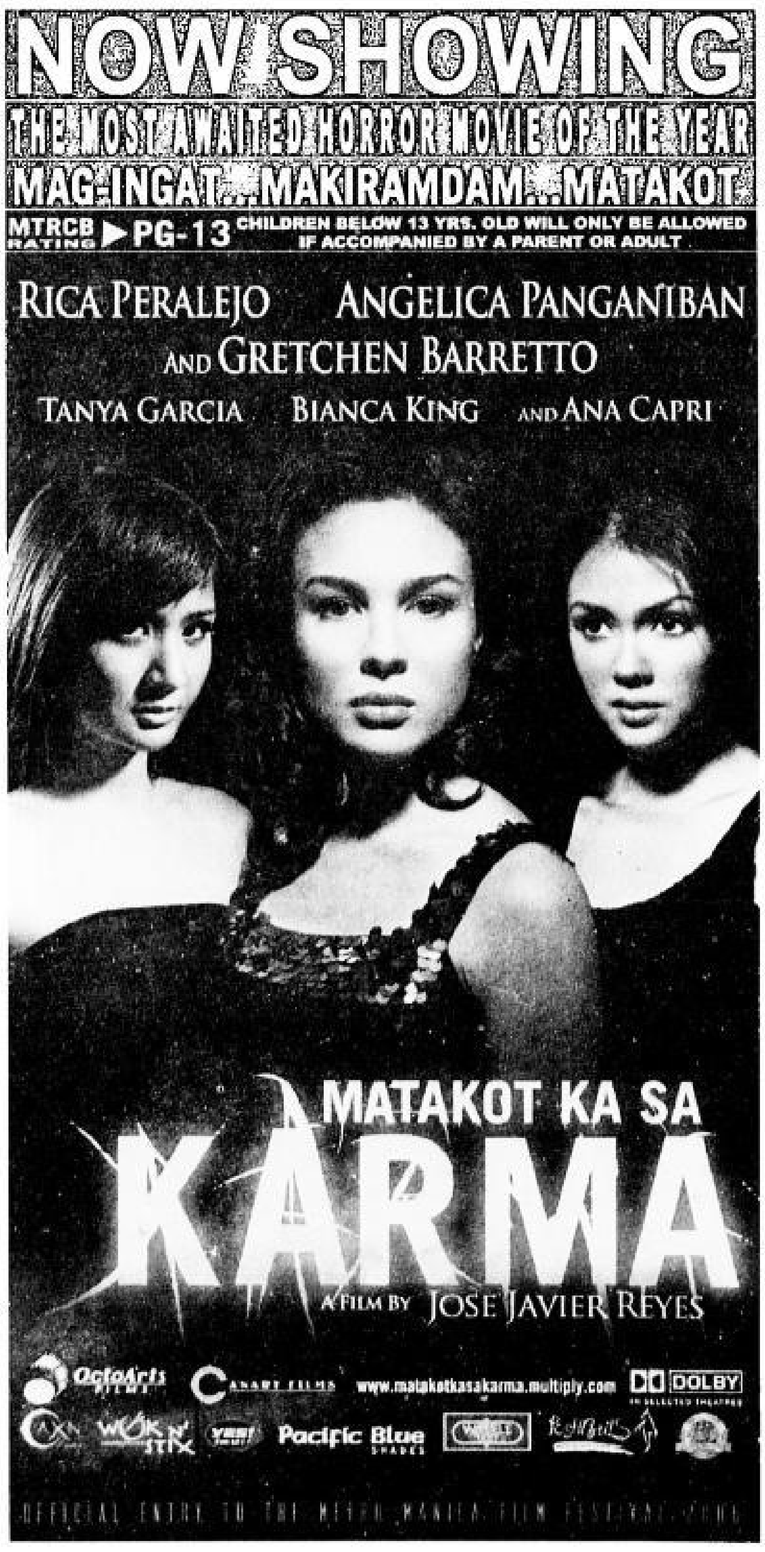
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OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2006

Most fascinating interviews . . .

COLIN FARRELL

OLIVER STONE

From page D3

Edward Norton

He is under-appreciated but in our book, he is one of America's finest actors, impressing us with his intensity in such films as "Primal Fear," "American History X" (he was chilling as a muscled white supremacist) and "The People vs. Larry Flynt." This year, we liked him better in "The Illusionist" (talk about intense—watch him concentrate to summon spirits onstage) than in "The Painted Veil," a film adaptation of W. **Somerset Maugham**'s novel set mainly in 1920s China.

When a window panel at a function room at the Waldorf Astoria accidentally opened and for a while no one could close it to prevent chilly winds from ripping through the room, Edward was unperturbed and calmly continued answering questions. He raved about how terrific the food was in Beijing and Shanghai where they filmed "The Painted Veil."

"And then we went to the mountains in South Central China. In one town there was a restaurant that had a menu board every night. The menu varied between bamboo rat, cat, dog, raccoon and snake. We stuck to tofu and vegetables mostly."

Also making it to our annual list of most engaging interviewees are **Angelina Jolie**, whom we just profiled last week, and the always-interesting **George Clooney**, our next subject in a coming column.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

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MANO PO 5: GUA AI DI G 12:30,3:00,5:30	ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH G 11:30,1:40,3:50,6:00	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO PG13 11:30,1:40,3:50,6:00

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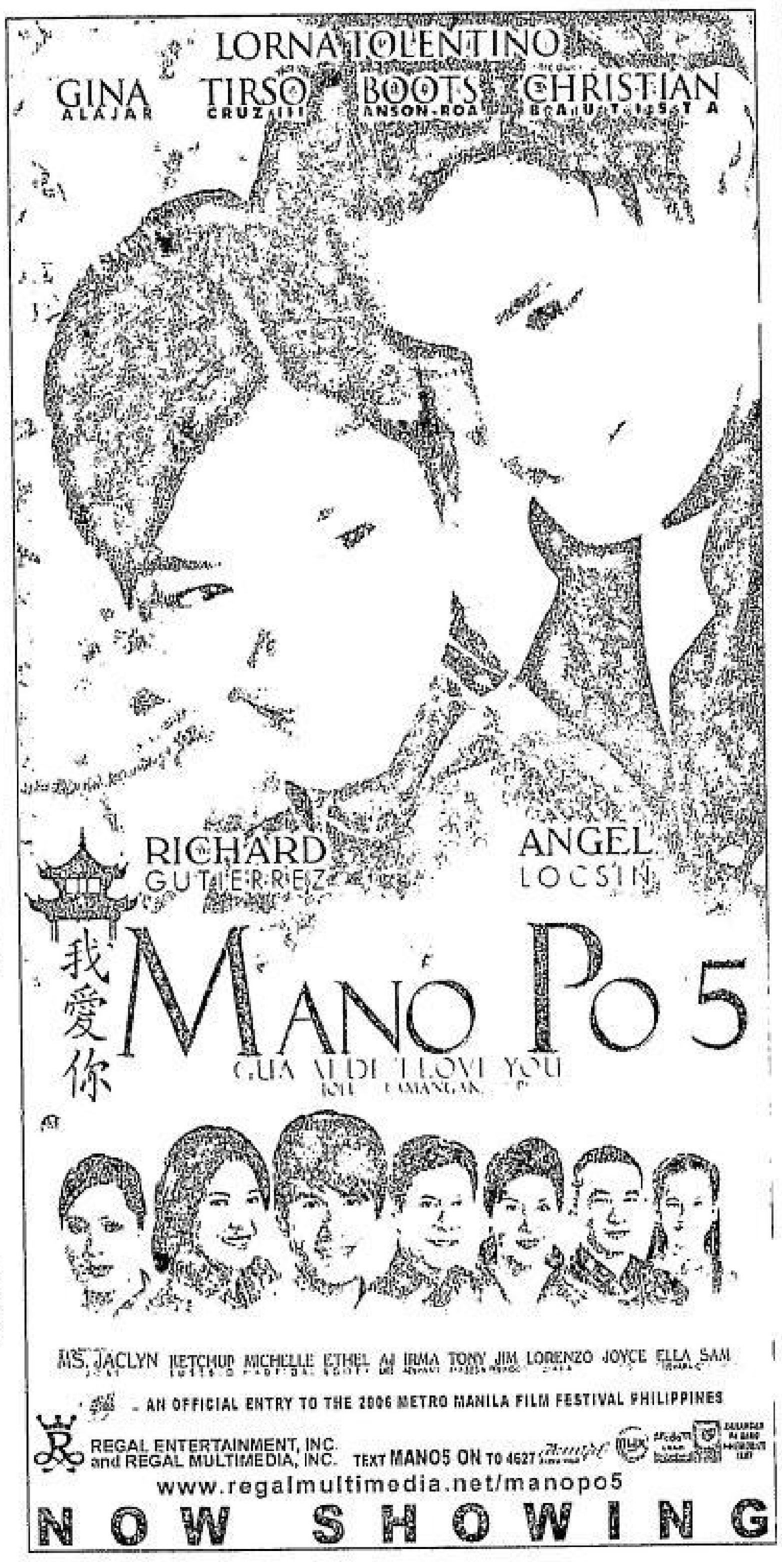
Judy Ann Santos at Ryan Agoncillo
Kasal Kasali Kasalo
A
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JOSE JAVIER REYES
METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL - PHILIPPINES OFFICIAL ENTRY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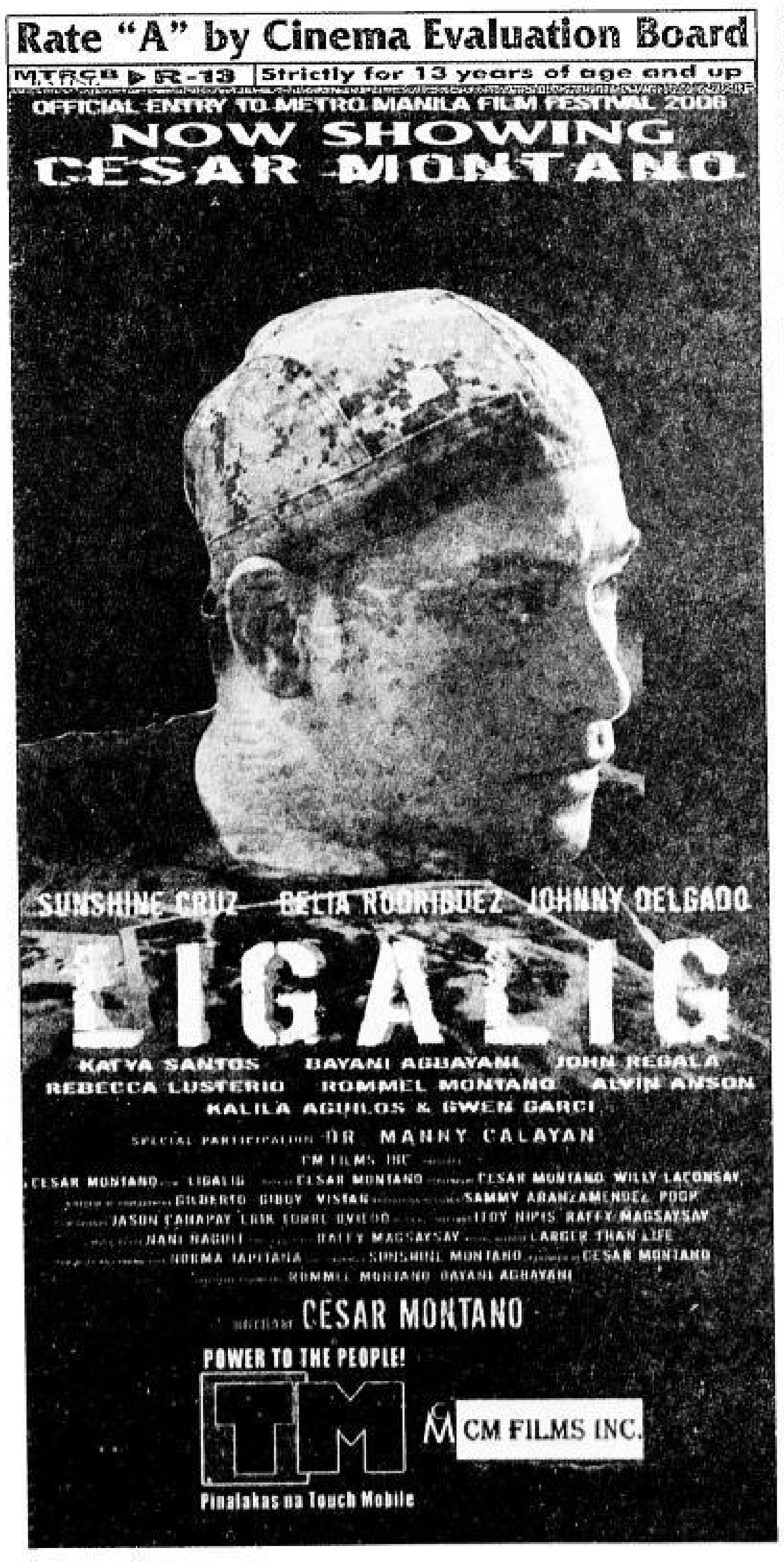
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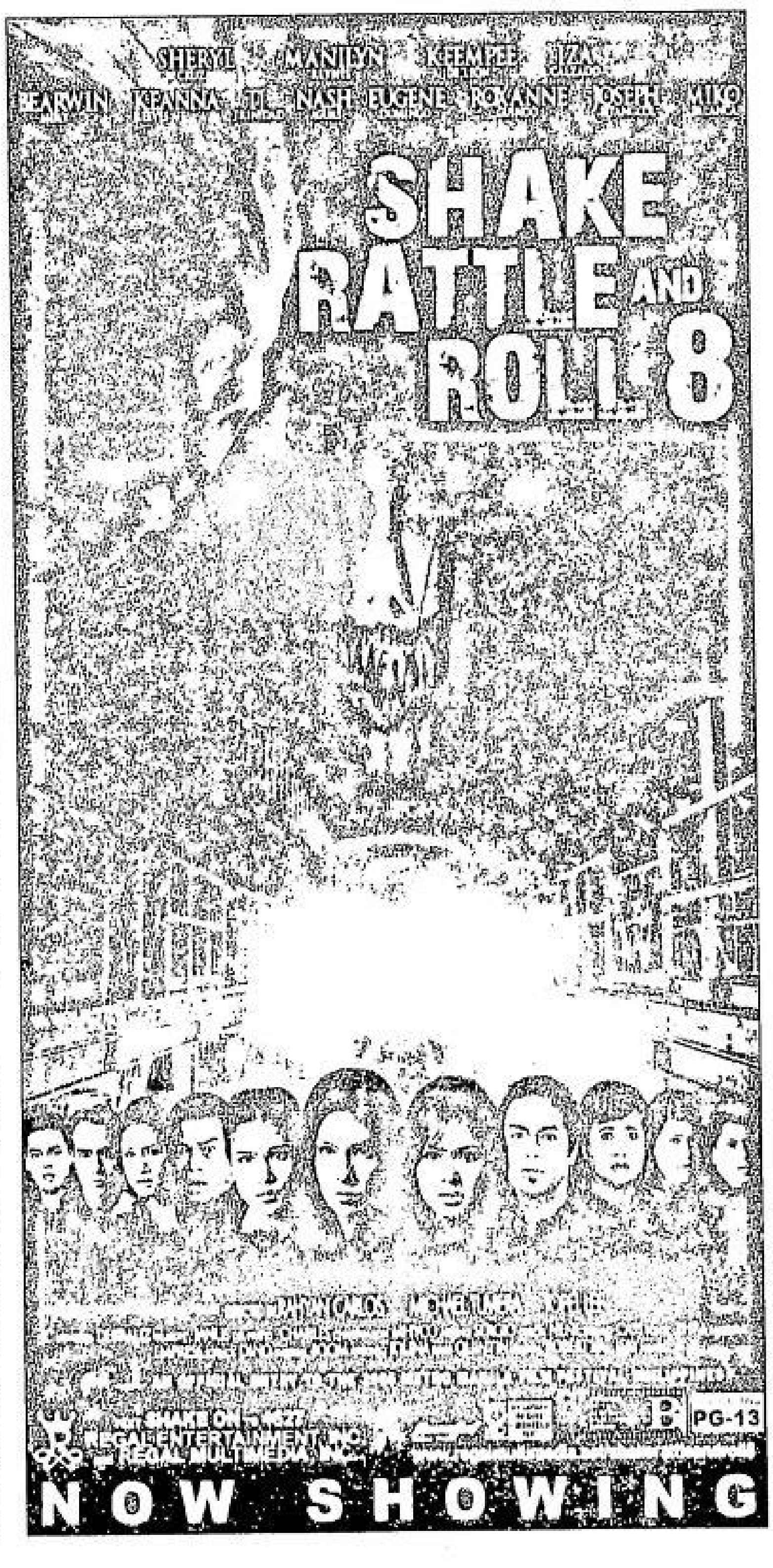
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GALLERIA 632-8116

1 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA • THX	10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8	10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00
4 MANO PO 5	12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35
6 Reserved for VICTORY CHURCH FELLOWSHIP	
7 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH	12:00 2:30 5:00
8 SUPER NOYPI	12:00 2:30 5:00
9 TATLONG BARAHA	1:20 3:30
10 LIGALIG	1:20 3:30 5:40

ERMITA 538-7809 to 12

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	10:10 12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00
2 LIGALIG	10:20 12:25 2:50 5:05 7:25 9:50
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH	10:20 12:25 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00
4 MANO PO 5	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA	10:30 12:25 2:20 4:15 6:10 8:05 10:00
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
7 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8	10:30 1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3	11:25 1:55 4:25 6:55 9:20
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH	10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05
4 SUPER NOYPI	11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA	10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
6 MANO PO 5	10:20 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
7 LIGALIG	12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
8 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8	10:40 1:20 4:00 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 5
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
7 LIGALIG
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH

CASH sa PELIKULA

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Watch at least (5) MMFF 2006 movie entries,
for a chance to win up to P100,000!!!
1 Grand Prize winner of P100,000
99 winners of P5,000

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December 25, 2006 to January 05, 2007

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Per DTI-NCR Permit #5517, Series of 2006

STA. ROSA (049) 837-090

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 5
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 MANO PO 5

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 MANO PO 5

ANGELES (045) 892-2346

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 5
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
5 LIGALIG
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO 5
5 LIGALIG
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 MANO PO 5
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 THE NATIVITY STORY
6 SUPER NOYPI

ILOILO (033) 338-8070

1 ZSA ZSA ZATURRNAH
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 MANO PO 5
4 SUPER NOYPI
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

CINEPLEX

1 ENTENG KABISOTE
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNAH
3 KASAL KASALI KASALO
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

PREMIERE

MANO PO 5 (GUA AI DI)

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, China Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
3 TATLONG BARAHA
4 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL - 8

starmall

EDSA SHAW

(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160

3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 DOLBY DIGITAL EX MANO PO - 3
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

metropolis star

www.clickthecity.com.ph

(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 8433994

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 TATLONG BARAHA

THEATRES

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 MANO PO - 3

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA

(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL - 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO - 3
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
6 TATLONG BARAHA
7 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
8 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Blue Wave

MARIKINA

Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 MANO PO - 5
2 TALTLONG BARAHA
3 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SUPER CINERAMA

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

MARKETPLACE

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 MANO PO - 5
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Masagana CINEMA

(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL

Center Mall Cinema

Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4440346)

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5801 to 03

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 MANO PO - 5
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Centre Plaza Cinema

(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
2 SUPER NOYPI
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL

CINEMA 2000

Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 SHAKE, RATTLE, & ROLL
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111140

1 MANO PO - 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL
3 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
4 MANO PO - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Lianas Cinema

(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
2 SUPER NOYPI

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 TATLONG BARAHA
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
3 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 SHAKE RATTLE 7 ROLL
4 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)
5 MANO PO - 5

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 MANO PO - 5
2 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SHAKE RATTLE 7 ROLL

Berma Cinema

(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 ENTENG KABISOTE - 3
2 LIGALIG (BATANG MAYNILA)

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

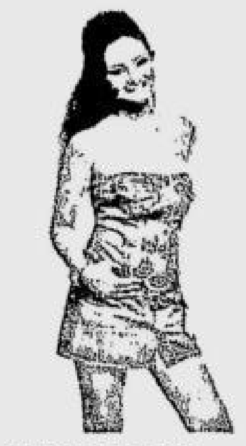
DAVE VALENTINO

JEWEL MISCHE

DEX GUINDOZA

JESI CORCUERA

AJUR ABRENICA



RENEE LACUNA

'Starstruck' 20: SWOT profiles

By Nini Valera

MEET THE TOP 20 "STARSTRUCK" survivors.

At their press launch on Wednesday, INQUIRER Entertainment asked each of them to list down their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to make for a SWOT analysis, a marketing practice that is applied to a brand before it is launched in the market place.

MART ESCUDERO, 16, of Cavite spends most of his time at Internet cafes or the gym. If his dream of stardom is fulfilled, he would like to help patients in the pediatric ward of the Philippine General Hospital. S—looks and talent; W—singing; O—chance to make good; T—can't see anyone who dances as well as he does.

KIKO JUNIO, 16, of Pampanga describes himself as "full of angst." His father is serving time in prison for drug possession. He says he himself has never used drugs. S—soft heart and pleasing personality; W—his attitude and *porma*; O—sees himself in the Top 14; T—survivor Prince.

JEWEL MISCHE , 16, of Bulacan is a student at the UP Diliman Conservatory of Music. She plays the guitar, piano and saxophone, and is one of the early favorites. S—God; W—the poverty she sees around her; O—wants to train to be a pilot; T—to lose a loved one.

LUI PEREZ, 19, comes from South Cotabato and enjoys golf. A sports enthusiast, he was a member of his school's swimming team, co-captain of the basketball team, and a key player in the football team. S—his self-confidence; W—lacks talent in singing and dancing: O—feels he would make it to top 14; T—Prince.

CHARIZ SOLOMON, 17, describes herself as "a natural." The girl from Pasay City says she is smart and stays true to herself. S—her body, talent and appeal; W—her face; O—sees herself as another Katrina Halili; T—her pessimism and lack of self-discipline.

JAN MANUAL of Laguna has a passion for cars and drag racing. The 20-year-old is also a dog breeder. S—God; W—family crises; O—his business acumen; T—Aljur

RENEE LACUNA, 17, is a student of Ateneo de Davao. She has both beauty and brains, she says, having received honors every year for her academic endeavors. S—confidence and talent; W—acting; O—anticipates being a star in soaps and movies; T—negative comments.

DEX GUINDOZA, 17, is from Tondo Manila. He enjoys swimming, dancing, singing and acting. S—singing, dancing, acting; W—his shyness; O—his determination to survive; T—Paolo, who's a better actor.

PAOLO AVELINO, 18, of Baguio City describes himself as a "*gimikero*." He has done both TV and print ads. S—acting; W—singing; O—opportunity to become a star; T—Aljur.

CHAD BURDEN, 20, was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, raised in Holland, and now lives in Cebu. He says he speaks fluent Dutch, German, French, English, Filipino and Cebuano. S—dancing; W—his heavily accented Tagalog; O—improve himself as a person; T—a Dutch accent.

JEAN DE CASTRO, 17, spent her childhood in Japan and now lives in Mandaluyong. She enjoys listening to jazz and rock music, but describes herself as a quiet person. S—acting and perseverance; W—family crises;

'STARSTRUCK'/D4

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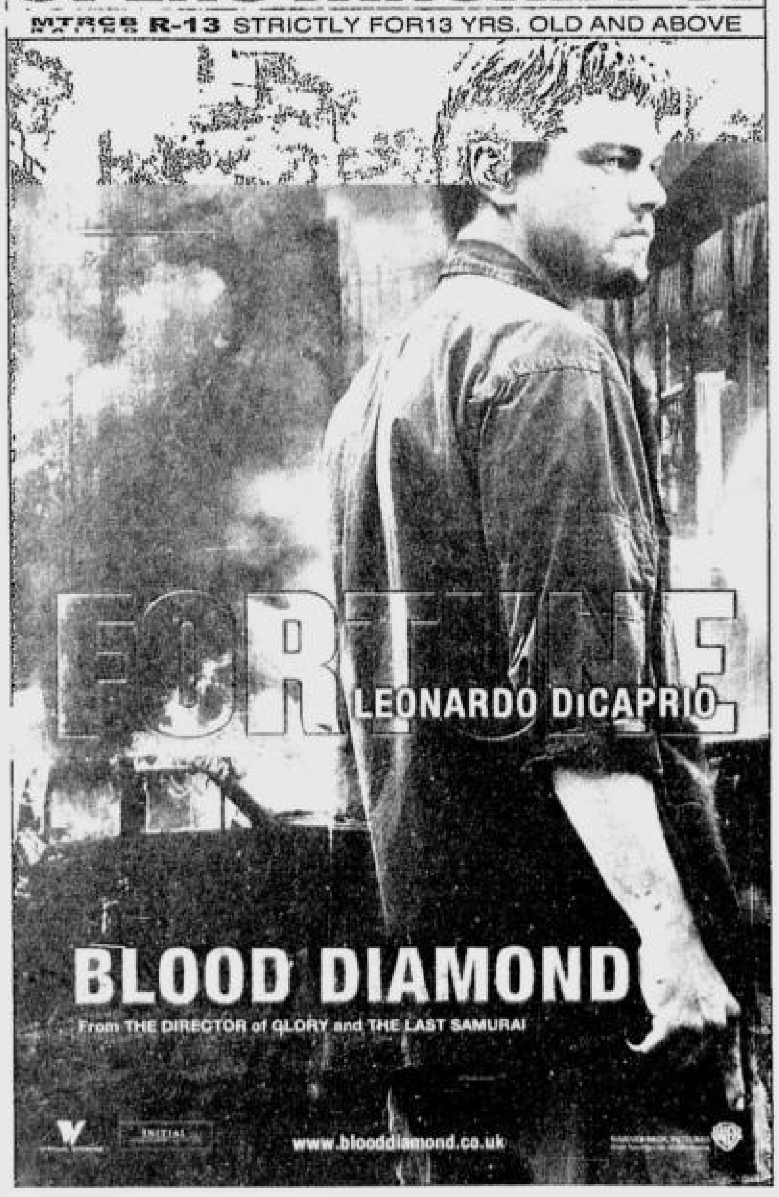

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2006 E

NOTICE TO THE MOTORING PUBLIC

Pursuant to DOTC Department Orders 2005-34 and 2005-37, the DOTC/LTO is mandated to efficiently and effectively implement the emission standards for motor vehicles as provided by the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 through the implementation of the ***PETC-ITF International Project***.

The PETC-ITF Interconnectivity Project allows the interconnection between the PETC's and the existing DOTC/LTO Information Technology System (DOTC/LTO IT System). With a three-way matching capability, the PETC-ITF Interconnectivity Project permits online authentication with the LTO-IT System which immediately locks the Certificate of Emission Compliance (CEC) number to the accredited testing centers and the motor vehicle record, which would subsequently prevent the re-issuance of the CEC to another motor vehicle.

Effective **JANUARY 2, 2007**, the public is strongly advised to have their motor vehicle emission test processed by DTI Accredited and DOTC/LTO Authorized PETCs that are connected online and real time to the LTO-IT system and bearing this seal .

REYNALDO I. BERROYA
Assistant Secretary
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE

Lagi Tayong Ok!

NO to Fake CECs !
NO to Smoke Belchers !
YES to Clean Air !

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(PDI - Dec. 30 & 31, 2006; Jan. 1, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Ilocos Sur
Municipality of Quirino

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date : December 31, 2006
Contract ID No.: SP-099-IN-01
World Bank Loan No.: 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the *Construction of School Buildings and Health Center.* Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The *Municipality of Quirino, Ilocos Sur* invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the *Construction of the following:*
   - *Package 1 — Four one storey 2 CL School Buildings*
   - *Package 2 — Three one storey 2 CL School Building and One Barangay Health Center.*
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting *January 3, 2007 at the BAC Secretariat, Mayor's Office, Municipal Hall, Quirino, Ilocos Sur* upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Two Thousand Pesos only (Php 2,000.00)* or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each package. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of *ninety (90) days* after bid opening and must be accompanied by a bid security for the following package: *Package 1 – One Hundred Fifteen Thousand Pesos (Php 115,000.00)* and *Package 2 – One Hundred Four Thousand Pesos (Php 104,000.00)* in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency and shall be delivered to the *Office of the BAC Chairman, Municipal Engineers Office, Quirino, Ilocos Sur on or before 10:00 A.M. of February 6, 2007* at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post qualification. The *Estimated Project Cost* for the subproject are: *Package I – Php 4,586,865.88 and Package 2 – Php 4,150,558.24.*
6. A pre-bid conference will be held at *10:00 A.M. on January 24, 2007 at the SB Session Hall, Quirino, Ilocos Sur.*

(Sgd.) JOSEFINO L. MANAGDAG
BAC Chairman

(PDI - December 31, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of CATANDUANES
Municipality of GIGMOTO

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date : December 31, 2006
Contract No.: SP-123-IN-01
World Bank Loan No: 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the *Construction of Seawall (Construction of Dist. III and San Vicente Seawall).* Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The ***Municipality of Gigmoto, Catanduanes,*** invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the ***Construction of 275 lineal meters rubble concrete seawall for Dist. III and Construction of 80 lineal meters reinforced concrete sheet pile seawall for San Vicente.***
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting *January 5, 2007 at Office of the BAC Secretariat,* upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 2,500.00)* or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after bid opening and must be accompanied by a security of *Three Hundred Forty Four Thousand Pesos (Php 344,000.00* in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency, and shall be delivered to the *Office of the BAC Chairman, Armando M. Padilla on or before 10:00 o'clock in the morning of February 6, 2007* at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post qualification. The **Estimated Project Cost** for the subproject is *Php 13,791,502.91.*
6. A pre-bid conference will be held at ***10:00 o'clock in the morning of January 24, 2007 at the Conference Room, Municipal Hall, Gigmoto, Catanduanes.***

(Sgd.) ARMANDO M. PADILLA
BAC Chairman

(PDI - December 31, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City
E-mail Address: *ltombox@lto.gov.ph* • Website: *www.lto.gov.ph*

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. RIB-2006-790

21 December 2006

TO All Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, and Heads of District Offices / Extension Offices and Other Officials and Employees Concerned, This Office

SUBJECT Mandatory Validation of Emission Testing Results in the LTO IT Project's System

Pursuant to Department Order Nos. 2005-34 and 2005-37, prescribing the rules and regulations governing the authorization of Private Emission Testing Centers (PETC) and PETC Information Technology (IT) Providers, all PETCs are required to be connected to the LTO-IT System on an online and real-time basis through their respective PETC-IT Providers allowing the verification of the emission test results at the LTO District Offices prior to motor vehicle registration.

With this, LTO officials and employees shall accept only emission test results that are verified and authenticated online, real-time under the DOTC/LTO-IT System effective January 2, 2007

The following are the guidelines in the processing of motor vehicle registration

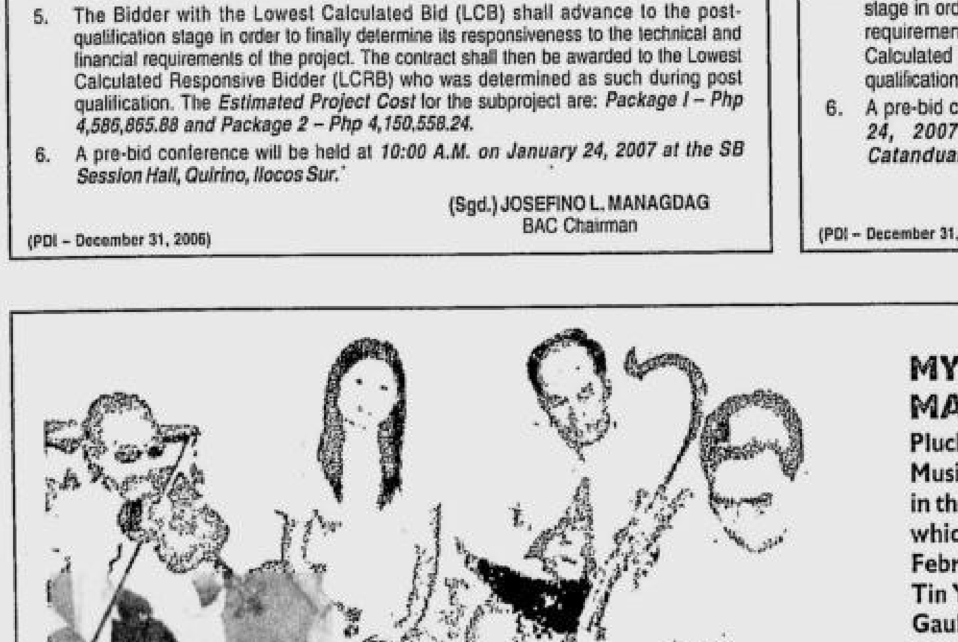
1. The system will verify and accept only motor vehicles with "Passed" emission test results for renewal registration of "Private" and "Exempt Private" vehicles and if combined with any miscellaneous transaction, otherwise, a rejection letter will be generated;
2. The system will not validate emission test results of other motor vehicle classifications and type of transactions;
3. If the motor vehicle has no corresponding emission record, a rejection letter will be generated (See Annex A for sample);
4. The system will only accept emission test results issued by the DOTC/LTO Authorized Private Emission Testing Centers (PETC) connected to the LTO-IT System online and real-time; otherwise, a rejection letter will be generated (See Annex B for the list of duly authorized PETC-IT Providers).

All orders/memoranda in conflict herewith are deemed superseded.

For strict compliance.

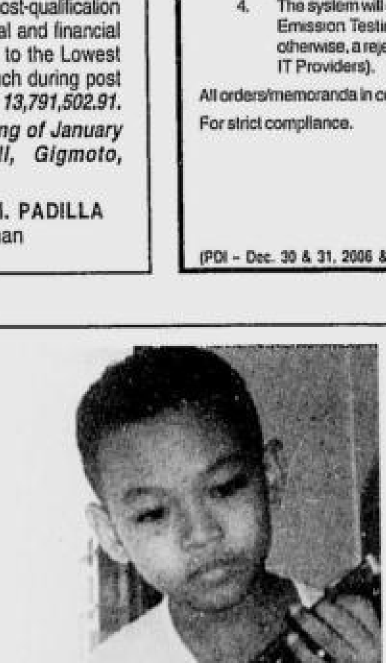
REYNALDO I. BERROYA
Assistant Secretary

(PDI - Dec. 30 & 31, 2006 & Jan. 1, 2007)



MYANMAR STRING MASTERS

Plucked string masters of the Gitameit Music Center of Myanmar will take part in the 2nd International Rondalla Festival which will be held in Dumaguete City in February 2007. Shown are violin master U Tin Yi, singer Daw Khin Soe Oo, Saung Gauk or Burmese harp player U Min Kyi, and 75 year old famous slack key guitarist U Tin. For inquiries regarding the festival, please call 9260028 or email rondalla2007@yahoo.com or visit www.rondallafestival.com.



YOUNGEST PARTICIPANT

The skill and musicality of the country's youth will be highlighted in the 2nd International Rondalla Festival which will take place in Dumaguete City in 2007. The festival is presented by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts through the Musicological Society of the Philippines, in partnership with the Province of Oriental Negros and in cooperation with the UP College of Music. Shown is Mark Khaled Y. Peralta, 8 years old, member of Cainta Los Trobadores Rondalla, the youngest participant to the rondalla festival. For inquiries please call 9260028 or email rondalla2007@yahoo.com or visit www.rondallafestival.com.

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RESIDENTIAL / AGRICULTURAL

QUEZON CITY — MIN BID
1. H & Lot / # 269 M Aquino St. Banlat Rd, Tandang Sora/LA 120/FA 191 — 1,700,000

LAGUNA — MIN BID
2. Res'l Corner Lot / Lot 93 Block Lake Caliraya Country Club Subd., Phase-II, Brgy. Lewin, Lumban. LA 886 — 380,000
3. Res'l / Agri'l Lot / Lot 20, Blk 12 Apitong St, Cens II Subd Brgy Canlubang, Calamba City / LA 480 — 1,810,000

Colina Subd – Sn Pedro, LAGUNA — MIN BID
Brgy Sn.Antonio (nr Toll gate & Filipinas Golf)
4. Lot / Lot 13 Blk 3 / LA 50 — 290,000
5. Lot / Lot 2 Blk 4 / LA 50 — 290,000
6. Cor. Lot / Lot 8 Blk 4 / LA 84 — 504,000
7. Cor Lot / Lot10 Blk 3 / LA 92 — 552,000

LAS PINAS - Brgy. Talon-IV — MIN BID
8. Lot/L2 B1,Chrysanthemum St Hansuyin Vill / LA 361 (via Marcos Alvarez Ave & nr SM Las Pinas) — 1,500,000

NUEVA ECIJA - Cab. City — MIN BID
529 Pag Asa, Daan Sarili (near LTO)
9. Lot / Lot 3 A 4 / LA 1,847 — 401,000
10. Lot / Lot 3 A 3 / LA 1,848 — 401,000

LA MAREA - Sn Pedro, LAGUNA — MIN BID
Near Sn Pedro Toll Gate – Sn Antonio
11. Lot / L 2 B 5, Ph 3 / LA 180 — 1,242,000
12. Lot / L 1 B 4, Ph 3 / LA 207 — 1,429,000
13. Lot / L 6 B 4, Ph 3 / LA 181 — 1,249,000
14. Lot / L 7 B 4, Ph 3 / LA 185 — 1,277,000
15. Lot / L 5 B 4, Ph 3 / LA 194 — 1,339,000

BULACAN – Plaridel — MIN BID
Brgy. Lalangan - Plaridel Heights
16. Cor Lot / L 2 B 47, LA 355 — 1,243,000
17. Cor Lot / L 2 B 38, LA 411 — 1,439,000

BULACAN – Meycauayan — MIN BID
18. 2 Sty Resl H & L, L14 B8, La Brezza Subd., Brgy Pantok/ LA 75 / FA 48 — 820,000

TARLAC CITY — MIN BID
19. 2 Sty H&L / L 7 B 18, Family Park Homes, Brgy Cut-Cut II San Miguel / LA 62 / FA 40 — 230,000

CAVITE – Dasmarinas — MIN BID
20. Hse & Lot / No 36 Kalamansi Road Greenfield Heights Subd Brgy Sampaloc 2 LA 329/FA85 (with Lis Pendens) — 620,000

CAVITE - Molino III, Bacoor — MIN BID
Madelaine Place, Springville Subd.
21. Lot / Lot 8 Blk 1 / LA 117 — 582,000
22. Lot / Lot 19 Blk 7 / LA 132 — 656,000

Central Phase 2, Springville Subd. (Lots)
23. L 5 B 1, near ClubHse / LA 232 — 1,636,000

Washington Manor, Springville Subd.
24. Lot / Lot 2 Blk 2 / LA 154 — 1,020,000

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL (Lots) — MIN BID
25. Lot/L27 B3, Brentwood St,Pine City Exec Vill,Brgy Balimbing LA 120 (nr Antipolo town proper) — 500,000

* ABOVE 2 MILLION *

26. Res'l Lot / Lot 3 Block 6-A Salford St (nr.cor Bristol St) Town & Country Est, Sta Cruz / LA-663 — 4,000,000

BATANGAS — MIN BID
27. Res'l T'Hse / L24 B22, Bristle Cone St, Phase 1, Brgy San Gregorio Laurel / LA 200,FA 127 (near SMC Training Center) — 4,000,000
28. Cor Lot/L12 B2,Coral Shores Layug Subd, Bagong Silang Calatagan (beach front) / LA 1,858 — 5,800,000

BATANGAS – Mt. Ridge, LAUREL — MIN BID
29. Resl Condo, Unit No B-1, Villa Mercedes, Niyugan / FA 186 — 6,500,000
30. Resl Condo, Unit No B-2, Villa Mercedes, Niyugan / FA 219 — 7,600,000

CAVITE- Dasmarinas — MIN BID
31. 2-Sty w/ Rfdeck H&L/L5&6 B5 Agustina Village / LA 388 FA 939 (nr Velmans Schl & St. Angela Montessori) — 5,700,000

Orchard Res'l. Estates and Golf & Country Club - Salitran, Dasmarinas, Cavite
FAIRWAY LOT
32. Lot 46 Blk 50 / LA 630 — 2,394,000
NON - FAIRWAY LOT
33. Lot 35 Blk 37 / LA 687 — 2,061,000

CAVITE – Carmona (Lot) — MIN BID
34. L 28 B 4, Ph 1, St Andrew St Manila Southwoods,Cabilang Baybay LA 450 (near Gate 1) * w/ Court Decision in favor of Unionbank — 3,005,000
35. L16 B1 Grand Cypress Rd / LA1,224 — 6,577,000

TAGAYTAY CITY — MIN BID
Tagaytay Highlands – Pine Crest Condo.
36. Resl Condo Unit w/ prkng slot Unit 2310, 3rd flr , / FA 97 (w/o shares) — 7,015,000
37. Resl Condo Unit w/ prkng slot Unit 2309, 3rd flr , / FA 97 (w/o shares) — 8,050,000

nr Tagaytay-Sta. Rosa Lag Rd & across Dame of Charity
38. Lot / Lot 2B1,Tagaytay-Calamba Rd, San Francisco / LA 1,171 (over looking Taal Lake) — 11,000,000

between Sta. Rosa, Lag. Short-cut & Aguinaldo H-way
39. Lot 8, Tagaytay Calamba Rd Tolentino West / LA 2,156 *w/ Lis Pendens / over looking Taal Lake — 20,000,000

MUNTINLUPA – Alabang — MIN BID
San Jose Vill. (infront of Alabang Town Cntr)
40. Lot / Lot 264 (Pcs 4946), St Joseph St / LA 526 * w/ Court Decision in favor of Unionbank — 3,810,000

* ABOVE 2 MILLION *
RESIDENTIAL / AGRICULTURAL

MANILA – Taft Ave., Malate — MIN BID
Burgundy T-Pacific Place Condo (across Dela Salle)
41. Resl. Condo w/ prkng slot # 16, Unit 2310, 23-F / FA 37 — 2,800,000
42. Resl. Condo w/ prkng slot # 12, Unit 2210, 22-F / FA 37 — 2,800,000

PASIG – Ort., AIC Gold Twr. — MIN BID
near Robinsons Galleria & Poveda School
43. Resl Condo W/ prkng slot (#19,B-4) Unit 1410, 14/F Emerald Ave cor Sapphire&Garnet St /FA 137 — 5,500,000
44. Resl Condo Unit w/ prkng slot (#42,B-5) Unit 909, 9/F Emerald, Ave cor Sapphire & Garnet St /FA 137 — 5,500,000

QUEZON CITY — MIN BID
45. 3-Sty Thse/Unit R Sentosa Hts # 18 Sct Bayoran St, South Triangle LA 182 / FA 391 (between Sct Tuazon & T. Morato, near Hotel Rembrant) w/ Lis Pendens — 7,200,000
46. Hse & Lot / # 19 Balabac St Araneta Vill, Brgy. Dona Imelda LA-777, FA-348 * w/ Lis Pendens (near Quezon Inst & SM Centerpoint) — 8,500,000

SAN JUAN – Addition Hills — MIN BID
47. 4-Sty w/ B'ment Resl T'hse/Unit-G,Goldlane Exec Hms # 208 Ortega cor L. Mencias Sts LA75 FA250 (nr Cardinal Santos Hosp) — 7,300,000

PARANAQUE CITY — MIN BID
48. Resl Condo Unit w/ prkng slot Unit 1801, 18th flr. Chateau De Baie Condo, Roxas Blvd. cor Airport Rd FA 144 (b'ween Baclaran Church & Uniwide C'tal) — 5,300,000

MAKATI CITY - Kingswood Twr — MIN BID
P. Tamo cor V. Cruz Extn, near Shopwise
(units are facing V Cruz Extn & Mkti CBD)
49. Condo /Unit 4-C, Twr B, 3BR, 2T/B & 1-Prkng slot FA 77/Prkng 12 5 — 3,000,000
50. Condo /Unit 14-E, Twr B, 3BR 2T/B, maid's rm. FA 77 / Prkng 12 5 — 3,425,000

1656 Penafrancia cor D. Oliman Sts, Valenzuela
51. Penthouse Condo w/ parking Kikusui Star Condo, Unit 5A / FA243 — 6,700,000

COMM'L. / AGRI'L.
(SUBJECT TO CREDIT APPROVAL)

PASIG CITY — MIN BID
52. Comm'l/Res'l Lot/Pcn-13-000159 C Raymundo Ave cor Windsor St, Eastside Manor, Brgy Maybunga/LA 1,893 — 26,200,000

PASAY CITY — MIN BID
53. Comm'l Condo / Office Space 18th Floor EGI Rufino Plaza, Taft Ave , Corner Sen Gil Puyat Ave / TFA 1,653 — 57,032,000

PARANAQUE CITY — MIN BID
Dama De Noche St, United Indl. (UPS-1V) Sn Dionisio
54. Indl Lot w/ Warehouse / Lot 6-A LA 1,803 / FA 1,720 (near Leslie Food) — 14,300,000

Across Chinese Temple along Coastal Rd, Tambo
55. Lot, L1 B5, Asiaworld City / LA 1,559 (near Marina Baytown) — 33,700,000
56. Lot, L2 B5, Asiaworld City / LA 1,400 (near Marina Baytown) — 32,200,000

MAKATI CITY — MIN BID
Brgy. Pinagkaisahan, nr EDSA, Kalayaan & The Fort
57. Comm'l / Res'l Lot / L 16 B 14, # 3904 Quingua St/LA204 (beside Forbes Park) — 5,500,000

1656 Penafrancia cor D. Oliman Sts, Valenzuela
58. Condo w/ prkng / Kikusui Star Condo, Unit G-A / FA 93 (on lease) — 3,100,000
59. Condo w/ prkng / Kikusui Star Condo Unit G-B / FA 85 (on lease) — 2,800,000

Millenium Plaza- Mkti. Ave cor Eduque St
60. Condo Unit / 5/F. FA 261 — 17,765,000

TARLAC CITY – Poblacion — MIN BID
Panganiban St. - across PLDT
61. Lot / Lot 4 A 1 / LA 373 — 5,390,000
62. Lot / Lot 4 A 2 / LA 373 — 5,390,000

QUEZON CITY – Libis — MIN BID
IBM Plaza,Eastwood City-beside Citibank
63. Office Condo w/ parking Unit 8-A / FA 166 — 8,000,000

QUEZON CITY — MIN BID
64. Building / Lots 8 & 9 Blk S 27 Timog Ave LA 1,380 FA 1,500 (nr Unionbank Timog Br & GMA-7) (on monthly Lease) — 70,000,000
65. W'house / 185 Roosevelt Ave SFDM / LA 5,641 / FA 3,454 — 140,000,000

MUNTINLUPA CITY — MIN BID
66. Comml Condo Unit/Unit 1908, 19th flr, Richville Corporate Tower Alabang-Zapote Rd, Madrigal Bus Park, Alabang / FA-59 — 3,700,000

VALENZUELA CITY — MIN BID
67. Indl Lot w/ 2 Whses (14&16) Barracks, Canteen,Guardhse Lot 1075 D 1 C, Plastic City # 6 T. Santiago St, Canumay-West / LA 9,923 / FA 7,096 — 39,703,000
68. Industrial Lot / Lot 382 C Plastic City Housing,Canumay LA 25,798 (via T Santiago & Pinagbayanan Sts) — 45,000,000

NUEVA ECIJA - Cab. City — MIN BID
529 Pag-Asa, Daan Sarili (near L.T.O.)
69. Agri Lot / Lot 3B / LA 37,041 — 2,366,000
70. Warehouse & Office Lot 2H / LA 2,260 / FA 580 — 5,098,000

CAVITE - Tanza, Bo. Tres Cruces — MIN BID
nr Transville Subd, via Trece Martires
71. Agri Lot / Lot-2931 (Rs-1273) LA 40,127 * w/ Adverse Claim & No Right Of Way — 5,000,000

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Negros Occidental
Municipality of Pulupandan

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date December 31, 2006
Contract No. SP-122-IN-01
World Bank Loan Nº: 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the *Construction of School Buildings*. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits*.
2. The Municipality of *Pulupandan, Negros Occidental* invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the construction of *two (2) units: one (1) storey, four (4) classrooms School Buildings with detached toilet.*
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting *January 5, 2007* at *The Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipal Budget Office, Pulupandan, Negros Occidental* upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of *Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 2,500.00)* or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after bid opening and must be accompanied by security of *One Hundred Twenty Two Thousand Pesos (Php 122,000.00)* in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency, and shall be delivered to *The Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipal Budget Office, Pulupandan, Negros Occidental* on or before *10:00 A.M. of February 6, 2007* at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post qualification. The Estimated Project Cost for the subproject is *Php 4,877,433.07.*
6. A pre-bid conference will be held at *10:00 a.m. January 24, 2007* at the *Reception Area, Municipal Hall, Pulupandan, Negros Occidental.*

(Sgd.) Marina M. Donasco
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Dec. 31, 2006)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late ROSARIO de Jesus VALDEZ was extrajudicially settled among her heir before notary public Atty. Eddie N. Hernandez of Mandaluyong City as per Doc #35, Page #8, Book# XX Series of 2006 (PDI- Dec. 17, 24, 31, 2006)

Notice is given that the estate of late Fidel Mercado was extrajudially settled by sole heir as per Doc 160 Page 3 Book III Series 2006 before Notary Public Randy F Pablo of QC PDI - December 24 and 31,2006 and January 7, 2007

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late SALVADOR J. SIBAYAN has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc. 438 Page 88 Book V Series of 2006 by Notary Public Orlando R. Landingin, Jr of Quezon City (PDI-Dec. 24, 31, 2006 & Jan. 7, 2007)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Public that the estate of the late Narcisa B. Atjera who died last Feb. 6, 2000 has been extrajudicially settled by way of an affidavit of self-adjudication by her sole heir Mr. Resurreccion D. Atjera, Jr before the Notary Public Arnold Baybay under his notarial seal identified as Doc No. 14 Page No. 3 Book No. XVII Series of 2006.
PDI-Dec 24&31,2006 &Jan 7,2007

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the deceased CESAR R. MEGIA who died intestate on 12 May 2002 was extrajudicially settled by his heirs on 08 December 2006 before notary public for Makati City, Atty. ALFONSO L. SANTOS,Per Doc. No. 463; Page No. 94; Book No. IX; Series of 2006 of his Notarial Registry.
(PDI-December 17, 24,31,2006)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the LOYOLA PLANS CONSOLIDATED, INC., Plan Application form nos. 00-00099872; 00-00099875-877; 00-00099879-880; 00-00055554; 00-00055558; 00-00055560; 00-00056352 & 00-00056355-357 issued to LOURNA C. MANALO in Calapan City were lost. (PDI-Dec.17, 24 & 31, 2006)

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In Memory of

Otilia Nidea Nieva

December 13, 1913 – September 4, 2006

Born and raised in Camalig, Albay; married and raised a family in Metro Manila; in retirement, settled in Los Angeles, California; peacefully passed away in San Diego, California; buried with her husband in Holy Cross Cemetery & Mausoleum, Culver City, Los Angeles County, California last September 9, 2006.

She was "*Tiling*" to her husband, Juan P. Nieva *(deceased)*,
"*Nanay*" to her children Lily & Rey Simon *(San Diego)*, Hercy *(Sacramento)* & Pam *(deceased)*,
Titan *(deceased)* & Dolly & Cecile, Mercy *(London, England)* and Larry & Myrna *(Toronto, Canada)*;
"*Lola*" to her 14 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren;
and "*Tiyang Tiling*" to the countless relatives and friends
to whom she shared the loving heart of Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of Mother Mary.
She truly lived and shared the words of St. Paul:

"I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints,
what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."
Ephesians 3:18-19 (NRSV)

To all whose lives she touched with her gentle and loving hands, we are all blessed.
Lily & Rey Simon <r-lsimon@sbcglobal.net>

"What You give, You do not take away ...
And death is only a horizon
And a horizon is nothing
save the limit of our sight."

In Loving Memory of

MA. LUISA ALBERT ATIENZA

December 13, 1946 – January 1, 1996

On her Eleventh Death Anniversary

Jacky and his wife, **Cecille**; children **Marti**, **Charly** and grandson **Nicky** request relatives and friends to remember her in their prayers and to join them at the celebration of the Holy Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Chapel, Camp Gen. Rigoberto J. Atienza, Libis, Quezon City at 3:30 pm on Monday, January 1, 2007.

The Holy Mass will also be offered at the following churches:

Sanctuario De San Jose	6:15 PM
Sacred Heart Parish Church	6:30 PM
Christ the King Parish	6:30 PM
Mary the Queen Parish	7:00 PM
St. John Bosco Parish	7:00 PM
Santa Maria della Strada Church	12:00 NN
Assumption Convent	8:00 AM
Our Lady of Montserrat Church	8:30 AM

Necrological rites for Obusan

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) paid tribute to National Artist for Dance Ramon Obusan in a necrological rites held at the CCP Main Theater. Obusan, 68, succumbed to cardio-pulmonary arrest on Dec. 21.

Obusan was the founder of the Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group (ROFG), which earned fame and distinction for its fidelity and authenticity in presenting Filipino traditional dances. The country's national artists, dancers, cultural workers, diplomatic corps, and relatives attended the state funeral on Dec. 28.

The remains of Obusan were laid to rest at the Manila Memorial Park.

Our Dearly Beloved

LOLITA "Lolly" ZAMORA MANALO

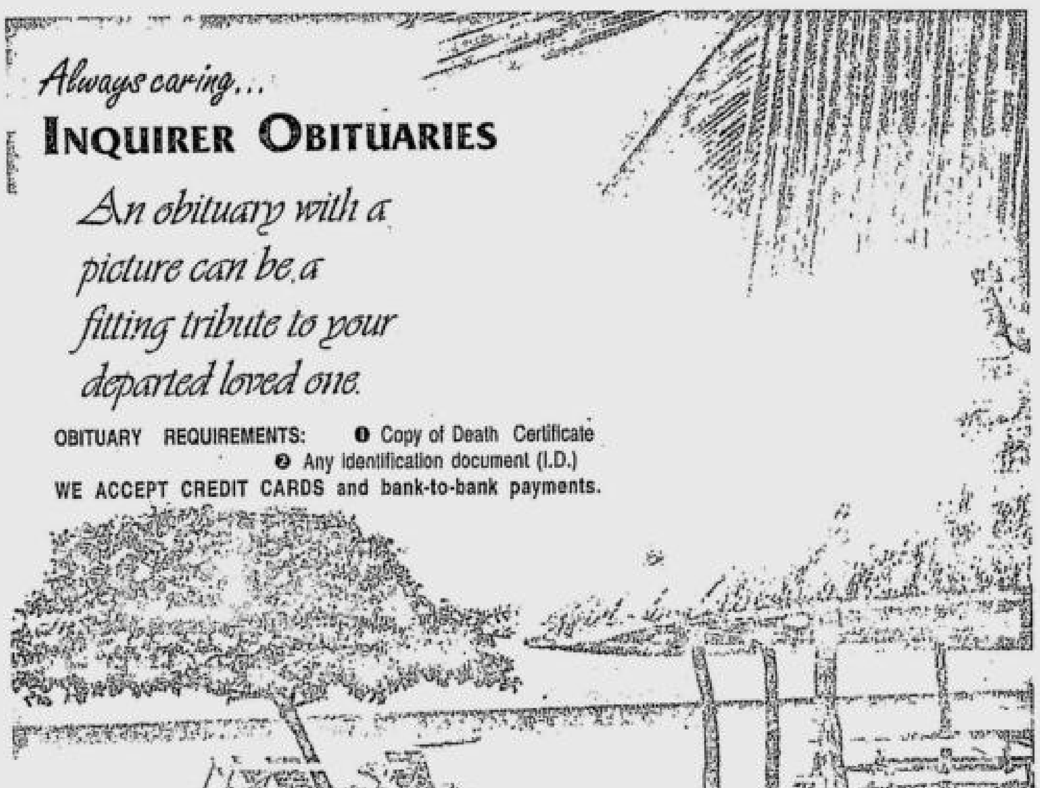
of Miranila Homes, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

Peacefully joined our Creator on December 28, 2006 at the age of 78.

Her bereaved husband **Eugenio**; children: **Renato & Relly**, **Gigi & Obet**, **Roland & Liza**, **Brenda**, **Raul** and **Ric**; grandchildren: **Xavier**, **Roxanne**, **Rachel**, **Reginald**, **Ralph**, **Jerome**, **Monica**, **Katrina**, **RJ**, **Marion** ("**Bun2**") and **RC**; sisters and brother **Romeo** and **Norma**; **Felisa & Teodoro**, **Salome** and all relatives and friends.

Her mortal remains now lie in state at the Mortuary of the Our Lady of Consolation Parish, 81 Alondras, Miranila Homes, Tandang Sora, Quezon City from December 28, 2006 to January 02, 2007.

Cremation will follow after the 9:00 a.m. Mass on January 02, 2007 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina at 11:00 a.m.



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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)
WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments.

Our Dearly Beloved

ATTY. JAIME "JIMMY" E. ILAGAN

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 29, 2006 at the age of 83.

His loving wife **Linda**; children: **Norman** and **Rory**, **Jerry** and **Ellie**, **Grace** and **Mon**, **Gani** and **Joy**, **Dottie**, **Dennis** and **Grace**, **Francis** and **Mayeen**; sister **Marina Oña**; grandchildren, all relatives and friends give thanks to the Lord for blessing his life.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on January 4, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Lourdes Church, Kanlaon cor. Retiro, Sta. Mesa Heights, Q.C.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life" John 11:25

DEATH NOTICE

ROMEO S. CRISOSTOMO
Died on Dec. 25, 2006
at the age of 53.

His body lies at Floresco Funeral Homes, Gen. Luna St., Malabon City.

Interment will be today at Tugatog Cemetery at 2 p.m.

GIOVANNI CASIS ONG M.D., FPCCP
Died on Dec. 27, 2006
at the age of 72.

His remains lie in state at Valdez Hall, Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

Interment will be on Jan. 3, 2007 at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please be informed that **HONEY D. GALANG** is no longer connected with **COMPASS TRAVEL AND TOURS** effective **December 8, 2006**. Any transactions made with her after the said date will not be honored by our office. Thank you.

(PDI - Dec. 24, 27, 31, 2006 & Jan. 3, 2007)

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Provincial Capitol 8700
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
Bids and Awards Committee
Tel (088) 221-2141 & (088) 813-3353

Project Reference Number: 2006 – 15-A
Name of the Project: TALAKAG WATER SUPPLY
Location of the Project: TALAKAG, BUKIDNON

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government Bukidnon, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of project	:	TALAKAG WATER SUPPLY
Location	:	Talakag, Bukidnon
Brief Description	:	Const. of 1 unit intake box, installation of G.I. uPVC pipes with a length of 28,781 meters, Construction of River Crossing Structure at Batang River and Construction of 1 unit Ground Reservoir (26,000 Gallons capacity) and 2 units Ground Reservoir with a capacity of 6,000 gallons each.
Approved Budget For the Contract	:	P 26,000,000.00
Contract Duration	:	365 Calendar days including rainfall allowance

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC AND HAVE KEY PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT available for the prosecution of the contract and must be registered in the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC). The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule	
	From	To
1. Advertisement/Issuance of Eligibility Statement Forms Documents	Dec. 31, 2006	Jan. 12, 2007
2. Deadline for Submission of Letter of Intent and Eligibility Statement Form	Jan. 13, 2007	Jan. 22, 2007
3. Issuance of Notice of Eligibility	Jan. 23, 2007	
4. Issuance of Bidding documents	Jan. 25, 2007	
5. Pre-Bid Conference	Jan. 31, 2007 @ 2:00 p.m.	
6. Opening of Bids	Feb. 14, 2007 @ 2:00 p.m.	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 5,000.00/set to the cashier of Provincial Treasurer Office

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved:
(Sgd.) JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES
Provincial Administrator
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Dec. 31, 2006 & Jan. 6, 2007)

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 20, 2004

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
City of San Fernando

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (P)	CONTRACT DURATION
1. DRUGS & MEDICINES	Provincial Capitol Building, City of San Fernando, La Union	Purchases of Drugs & Medicines, Medical/Surgical, Laboratory, Dental, X-Ray Supplies for LUMC and District Hospitals	8,971,061.10	180 CD
2. MEDICAL/SURGICAL			4,463,395.20	180 CD
3. LABORATORY SUPPLIES			2,348,383.00	180 CD
4. DENTAL SUPPLIES			160,897.00	180 CD
5. X-RAY SUPPLIES			516,080.00	180 CD

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 3, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	Jan. 8, 2007, 9:00 A.M., Board Rm., Capitol Bldg., SFC
3. Opening of Bids a. Drugs and Medicines	Jan.15, 2007, 9:00 A.M., Board Rm., Capitol Bldg., SFC
b. Medical/Surgical Supplies	Jan. 16, 2007, 9:00 A.M., Board Rm., Capitol Bldg., SFC
c. Laboratory Supplies	Jan. 17, 2007, 9:00 A.M., Board Rm., Capitol Bldg., SFC
d. Dental Supplies	Jan. 17, 2007, 1:00 P.M., Board Rm., Capitol Bldg., SFC
e. X-Ray Supplies	Jan. 17, 2007, 1:00 P.M., Board Rm., Capitol Bldg., SFC
4. Bid Evaluation	January 18 to January 26, 2007
5. Post-Qualification	January 18 to January 26, 2007
6. Notice of Award	January 18 to January 26, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of: for Drugs and Medicines = P2,000.00; Medical/Surgical Supplies = P1,500.00, Laboratory Supplies = P1,000.00; Dental Supplies = P500.00 and X-Ray Supplies = P500.00 to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier

The **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION** assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) DR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN
BAC Chairman

Contact Person

MS. CATHERINE E. FRANCO
BAC TWG Chairman/Assistant Provincial Budget Officer
Tel. No. (072) 700-5309
(PDI-Dec. 24 & 31, 2006)

People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Travel for free with UnionBank OmniPass

INTRODUCING THE LATEST ADDITION to UnionBank's family of specialty credit cards—OmniPass Credit Card-the Card that gives endless possibilities in traveling!

The newly launched OmniPass gives the fastest and easiest way to travel for free either by air, land or sea. Cardholders automatically earn one travel point with just P40 spending that is charged to their UnionBank OmniPass. And with the special partnerships with Philippine Airlines' Mabuhay Miles Frequent Flyer Program, SuperFerry, Avis and Nissan Rent a Car and Club Manila, OmniPass cardholders can travel without borders.

Cardholders can fly for free via Philippine Airlines' Mabuhay Miles Frequent Flyer Program by simply transferring the travel points for a free plane ticket or they can fly via the airline of their choice by redeeming directly from the UnionBank OmniPass Travel Rewards. Cardholders can rediscover the art of traveling by sea on a Sail Away Cruise aboard SuperFerry or travel by land in style with a chauffer-driven limousine service or avail themselves of airport transfer services from Avis and Nissan Rent A Car.

OmniPass cardholders enjoy great vacation packages when they convert their travel points into free local and international air and accommodation packages. There is also an option to fast track travel rewards with a combination of Easy Earner Travel Points and Cash charged to their UnionBank OmniPass. Cardholders can also enjoy one of the lowest vacation package rates in the country by simply charging the entire Travel Reward to their UnionBank OmniPass. They also get free tourist visa assistance when they buy their plane ticket from any UnionBank accredited travel agency.

De luxe traveling is also made possible with OmniPass. Cardholders enjoy preferential treatment at the Club Manila lounge in Naia Terminal One. Enjoy sumptuous gourmet buffet and drinks for free. Get exclusive discounts at the business center for those last-minute business transactions. Relax to a soothing massage experience at a discounted rate. Cardholders can also enjoy the luxury of having a travel concierge at their helm to handle everything from plane tickets to hotel and airport bookings to information and referral services related to travel 24/7 all year long.

Plus, Omnipass Cardholders also get exciting travel perks, freebies and discounts when they use UnionBank OmniPass in local beaches and resorts, hotels, spas and travel shops. Cardholders can also enjoy great discounts when buying their SuperFerry tickets and Sail Away Packages and when availing themselves of airport transfers from Avis or Nissan using the UnionBank OmniPass.

And because it's a UnionBank Visa Credit Card, the OmniPass is also packed with a lot more wonderful benefits such as the Lights Installment Program, Bill Manager, Car Secure Installment Program and Balance Transfer among other exclusive features of the UnionBank Visa Credit Card.

With UnionBank OmniPass, traveling in convenience and style has gone up another level. All the needed perks and privileges that come with this card were designed to give you the best travel packages and services. Call UnionBank customer service at 84186 today to apply for the new UnionBank OmniPass Credit Card. Bon Voyage!

KAYANG-KAYA NI MISIS MEMBERS OATH-TAKING

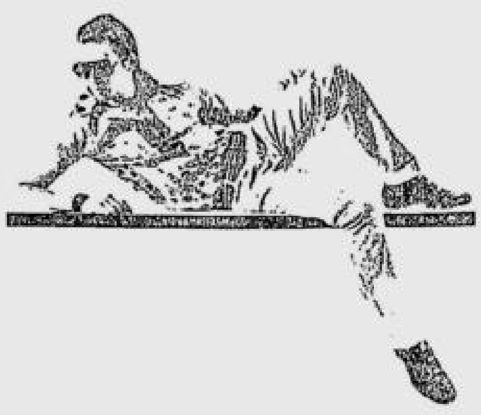
The Malabon-Navotas based NGO Kayang Kaya ni Misis held its new member's oath-taking recently. Led by prime mover Jaye Lacson-Noel, wife of party list representative Rep. Florencio G. Noel, KKM empowers housewives through income-generating projects like basket, candle, candy, soap, herbal medicine and native cakes making. The program has already benefited thousands in the district and is set to be replicated nationwide. Shown is Jaye (seated center, second row) with some of her leaders after the oath-taking of the more than 5,000 members at Plaza Rodriguez Amphitheater in Malabon recently.

G^3 opens at SM North's The Block

SM NORTH'S NEW ADDITION TO ITS string of exciting shopping hubs at The Block is G^3 (pronounced G Cubed), a total men and women's footwear store enhanced with trendy apparel and accessories to match its extensive line of shoe merchandise. G^3 houses three American fashion footwear labels-the edgy, fashion-forward GBX; the polished, refined Giorgio Brutini; and the new female line, young Hollywood-inspired GStar.

The shop has just launched its latest collection to usher in a new and different kind of chic for the Holidays -- the latest arrivals in GBX and Giorgio Brutini footwear to go with the newly introduced GBX apparel and GStar shoes and apparel featuring basic shapes with playful, trendy details. Choose from a variety of cool items for him-cotton polo shirts in interesting prints to match a variety of comfortable leather footwear that he can slip on for work, adventure, leisure or pleasure. For her, there are cargo shorts, ruffle-layered minis, funky or sexy silk tops that go well with leather-cum-lace flats, floral-adorned clogs or stone-clad stilletos that make for a sweet-yet-edgy look this Season.

G^3 is located on Level 3 at The Block in SM North Edsa. For inquiries, call 442-0090.



Security Bank promotes early saving habits

IN AN EFFORT TO ACCELERATE THE ADVOCACY of getting the country's youth to appreciate the value and long-term benefits of savings, Security Bank Corp launched Jr.One, a savings account designed particularly those 18 years of age and below.

The new product is described as an interest-earning account bundled with personal accident insurance that can be utilized as an educational fund/allowance that also includes a dental and health consultation package.

Other benefits include gifts on events like birthdays and account anniversaries; exclusive events for account holders; balance upgrade promos; and kiddie points or reward points.

"Rather than offer frills they would find difficult to appreciate or doing a raffle wherein only a few can win, we opted to design a product with which every account holder can enjoy a package of benefits that are both necessary and practical", explained Joven B. Hernandez, Security Bank's head of the consumer banking group. "We believe Jr.One and its benefits can help motivate the younger generation long enough to realize the value and benefits of developing the habit of saving early in life", Hernandez adds.

The Jr.One account can be opened with a minimum of P500. Account holders will be able to monitor and manage their own funds with their own passbook and/or a MasterCard Electronic ATM card.

Security Bank believes that the product can help the youth learn how to value money-a basic principle of future financial stability which has been overtaken by the advent of multi-media consumer marketing and the "I must have it" mentality of our youth today.

"This product is also a tool that can help parents get involved in inculcating the right values on finances in their children. It is a way they can get involved in a most constructive manner", adds Hernandez.

Welcome 2007 in style at Eastwood City

SAY GOODBYE TO THE EVENTFUL year that was and bid a warm, grand welcome to 2007 in style... only at Eastwood City!

Families and friends, young kids and adults alike will all converge at the Eastwood Central Plaza for a long, long night of partying. Top Magic DJs will entertain the audience, so expect a lot of lively street dancing to last well into the morning.

At exactly 12 midnight, the entire Eastwood City skyline will light up with a grand fireworks display! Watch as a burst of colors illuminates the skies and makes your eyes glow with wonder. Cheer on as you all welcome New Year 2007 with a big blast!

The New Year countdown and street party made possible by Magic 89.9 and Eastwood City starts at 8 p.m. onwards this Dec. 31. It's the culminating event of the "Eastwood City LeGrand Festival" this entire month of December. Isn't it the best way to end the year? It's definitely not to be missed, so call 687-06770 to 74 or text (0917) 8EWCITY for more details.

Last chance for Kenny Rogers' Noche Buena feast

STILL WONDERING WHAT TO HAVE FOR DINNER ON NEW Year's eve? Look no further as Kenny Rogers Roasters has carefully put together three mouth-watering Noche Buena Feast food bundles for your family's dining enjoyment. You can start off with Krispy Chicken Feast-eight pieces of Krispy Chicken, two large fries, four side dishes (corn and carrots, mashed potato, macaroni and cheese, chicken macaroni salad) and four brownies for only P599. Then there's also the Roast Chicken Feast composed of a whole roast chicken for that Christmas aroma, plus two large fries, a complete complement of four side dishes and four brownies for only P599. And if you want to have a little of everything nice Kenny Rogers has to offer, there is the Best of Kenny bundle-quarter inasal roast, quarter classic roast, two pieces of Krispy Chicken, three pieces of chicken tenders and half rib for only P499. Each combo is good for four to six persons, and enables you to save up to P73. You can also order add-ons such as spaghetti platter (P70) or four scoops of Java Rice (P60) for your total satisfaction. But if you are bent on bringing out the family for the holidays, visit its new theme Kenny's Café at the SM Pampanga, Festival Mall and Robinsons' Manila outlets to get a feel of Kenny Rogers' cozy new look. Promo runs until Dec. 31 and is valid for dine-in, take out and delivery.

Charantia in Kuwait to curb high diabetes incidence

RECENT STATISTICS SHOW THAT MORE than 20 percent of Kuwaitis are said to be suffering from diabetes. Their sedentary life notwithstanding, they love to eat too much rice, leaving little room for high-fiber food like vegetables. With the rising incidence of diabetes in that country, Charantia Ampalaya Food Supplement, the no.1 Ampalaya brand in the Philippines, is ready for export in that Gulf state.

Early this December, officials from the Kuwait-based herbal and natural products company EnerVit visited the makers of Charantia, Herbcare Corp, to learn more about Ampalaya and its benefits to diabetics.

Although not uncommon in Kuwait where it is known as Indian cucumber, Ampalaya fruits are often left in one corner of the supermarket where little, if any, is promoted of its blood sugar-lowering properties. But Dr. Bassam M. Isber, marketing manager of EnerVit, said he has an idea about Ampalaya's anti-diabetes properties from Indian workers in Kuwait who would make juice out of the fruits. A relative is also using Ampalaya. "I was wondering why we are not using it as a food supplement."

Further research led him to Herbcare, and he realized Charantia was being exported worldwide-to North America, Mexico, Japan, Korea and Europe. The addition of Kuwait makes Charantia the most extensively exported Filipino Ampalaya brand in the world.

Isber also noted that Charantia plays a vital role in helping curb the further spread of diabetes in the country. Although much is needed, he said, to promote Ampalaya's blood sugar-lowering properties to the Kuwaiti public and health professionals. "If they can try Charantia for a month, they will see the results and hopefully they will love it. They can use it as a supplement in their diabetes regimen."

Ten years ago, promoting herbal products like Charantia to Kuwaiti seemed impractical. "The patients and doctors were not open to them. The patents would want immediate effect. They preferred chemical-based medicines. They didn't want to wait too long," Konstandi said. "But now so many want to try natural-based products." She said that natural products are for long-term, and should be viewed as part of a person's healthy lifestyle much like Charantia is part of a diabetic's everyday diet.

Families bond over cooking at Verdana

COMMUNITY INNOVATIONS' VERDANA Homes Mamplasan, together with the United States Department of Agriculture, recently held a cooking demo in the South and made family cooking part of its Urban Lifestyle Series. This is an initiative of Community Innovations to encourage urban achievers to take time off from work and enjoy the lifestyles that they deserve.

"Food and cooking has always been part of the Filipino community- it is something that is close to our hearts," says Iris Josef, Community Innovations' project development manager. "Food bonds families. Over dinner, we don't just practice table manners; we practice the art of communication and we celebrate the spirit of kinship."

Chef Jill Sandique, one of the country's celebrated chefs, shared her culinary expertise with both parents and kids for a complete palatable treat. Chef Jill made dishes like Crudités, Penne with Tomato Basil Sauce and Panna Cotta more family-and novice-friendly with her practical tips.

"When you want to cook something special for your family, it doesn't have to be complicated," says Chef Jill. She shared guidelines on food preparation-from the simple proper hand washing technique to the secret in sautéing and cooking various dishes.

Cooking is one of the best bonding activities for the family. It is an enjoyable way for parents to get closer with kids as they spend time meticulously preparing palatable dishes. They can share not only the taste and the aroma of the food but also the love and shared moments that are poured in its preparation

At Verdana, however, the bonding session doesn't end with the meal. After enjoying the culinary treat, families can come together at the community's two-hectare central park.

Verdana is only a 15-minute drive from Alabang, five minutes away from Mamplasan exit of SLEX, and just a few minutes away from reputable schools such as Brent International School, St. Scholastica's College-Westgrove and De La Salle University-Canlubang.

For inquiries on Verdana Homes Mamplasan, call 888-0000, e-mail cii-sales@ayalaland.com.ph or log on to www.verdanamamplasan.com.ph.

Pyromusical countdown at MOA

WITNESS THE LAST HOURS OF 2006 AT THE SM Mall of Asia. On Dec. 31, the SM Mall of Asia, in cooperation with Starmaker Dazzling Pyromusicals, will be having the grandest New Year's countdown ever. See the spectacular fireworks displays every hour from 8 p.m. onwards, with the themes: 8 p.m.: "Celestial Showers"; 9 p.m.: "Silver Rain"; 10 p.m. "Golden Brocade"; 11 p.m.: "Dancing Stars; 12 midnight: "Pyrospectacular Welcomes 2007".

Walter Bread: the healthy choice

EATING HABITS CAN HAVE A BIG IMpact in your health. A balanced meal will not only make one feel better, it can actually reduce the risk of acquiring certain diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cancer.

Health and medical organizations are one in saying that a high-fiber diet is good for the body. When regularly eaten as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, fiber has been shown to help lower blood cholesterol, thus reducing the risk of coronary heart disease. A high-fiber diet may also help reduce the risk of diabetes and colon and rectal cancer.

Fiber can be found in wheat bread. In general, 100-percent whole wheat/whole grain breads have more fiber than white bread or other breads made with wheat flour. For a more healthy choice, experts would recommend eating wheat bread rather than the white one. However, this is easier said than done. Although it is healthier, most people do not like eating wheat bread because of its coarse texture and taste.

In order to encourage more people to eat wheat bread, Creative Bakers concocted a way to make it smoother and more delicious via the Walter Sugar Free Wheat Bread and Double Fiber Wheat Bread.

Walter Sugar Free Wheat Bread has no bromate, is cholesterol-free and contains no trans fat. It also has zero sugar and is 97-percent fat free. It is high in nutritional values and fibers plus more vitamins and minerals.

The Double Fiber Wheat Bread, on the other hand, contains whole wheat and apple fiber, giving consumers the benefit of both soluble (fruit) and insoluble (grain) fibers. Two slices of this bread contains more fiber than other brands.

The best feature of both breads lies in the fact that they are smooth, moist and delectable. They are good tasting foods with good nutritional profile prepared to meet the discriminating taste of today's consumers.

Your choice of food can have a big impact on your health. For people who are looking for fortified and functional products with less sugar, salt, fat and cholesterol yet are delicious enough to eat, Walter health nutrition breads are perfect choice.

Walter Sugar Free Wheat Bread and Double Fiber Wheat Bread are available at all leading groceries and supermarkets nationwide.

Music, fireworks at Marco Polo Plaza Cebu

THE MARCO POLO PLAZA CEBU, THE PREMIER BUSINESS destination in the Queen City of the South, holds its New Year's countdown with an array of activities to welcome 2007. Enjoy a multitude of music: Pop music at the Al Fresco and Garden Terrace, Big Band Dance at the Grand Ballroom, and Classics at the Lobby. Then end the year with a dazzling fireworks display seen from the top of the Marco Polo Plaza, the highest view in town; gaze around an unfettered 360-degree panorama of the entire metropolis from a height of 600 feet above sea level and see all of the fireworks of Cebu City! All of these for an appropriate price of P2007 net per person, all-inclusive. For reservations, call (032) 253-1111 in Cebu or 888-8168 in Manila, or log on to www.marcopolohotels.com.

JOB Market

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(Makati)
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(Makati)

Outbound Collections Representatives
(Ortigas)

Technical Support Representatives
(Commonwealth, Makati, Ortigas)

Finance and Sales Associates
(Ortigas)

Fraud Analysts
(Makati)

Customer Service Advisors - Wave 1
(Makati)

Other Openings:

Team leaders: Health Care / Internet Service Account
(Makati)

Recruitment Specialist
Recruitment Officer
(Commonwealth)

Sourcing Officer
(Alabang, Commonwealth)

Reports Analyst
Recruitment Associates - Phonescreeners & Encoders
(Makati)

Business Systems Associate
(Alabang)

Apply in our Makati or U-Belt site from Jan. 2 to Jan. 5 and get a chance to take home free DVD and MP3 players.

Visit any of our sites from Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm, and experience faster processing. You may also email your resume to philippinesrecruitment@convergys.com or call our recruitment hotline at (02)581-5760.

For U-Belt applicants, we accept walk-ins Mondays to Sundays, 10am to 7pm.

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RECRUITMENT SITES

Commonwealth Office
7/F Diliman Commercial
Center, 146 Don Mariano
Marcos Avenue, Diliman
Quezon City
(02)756-7088

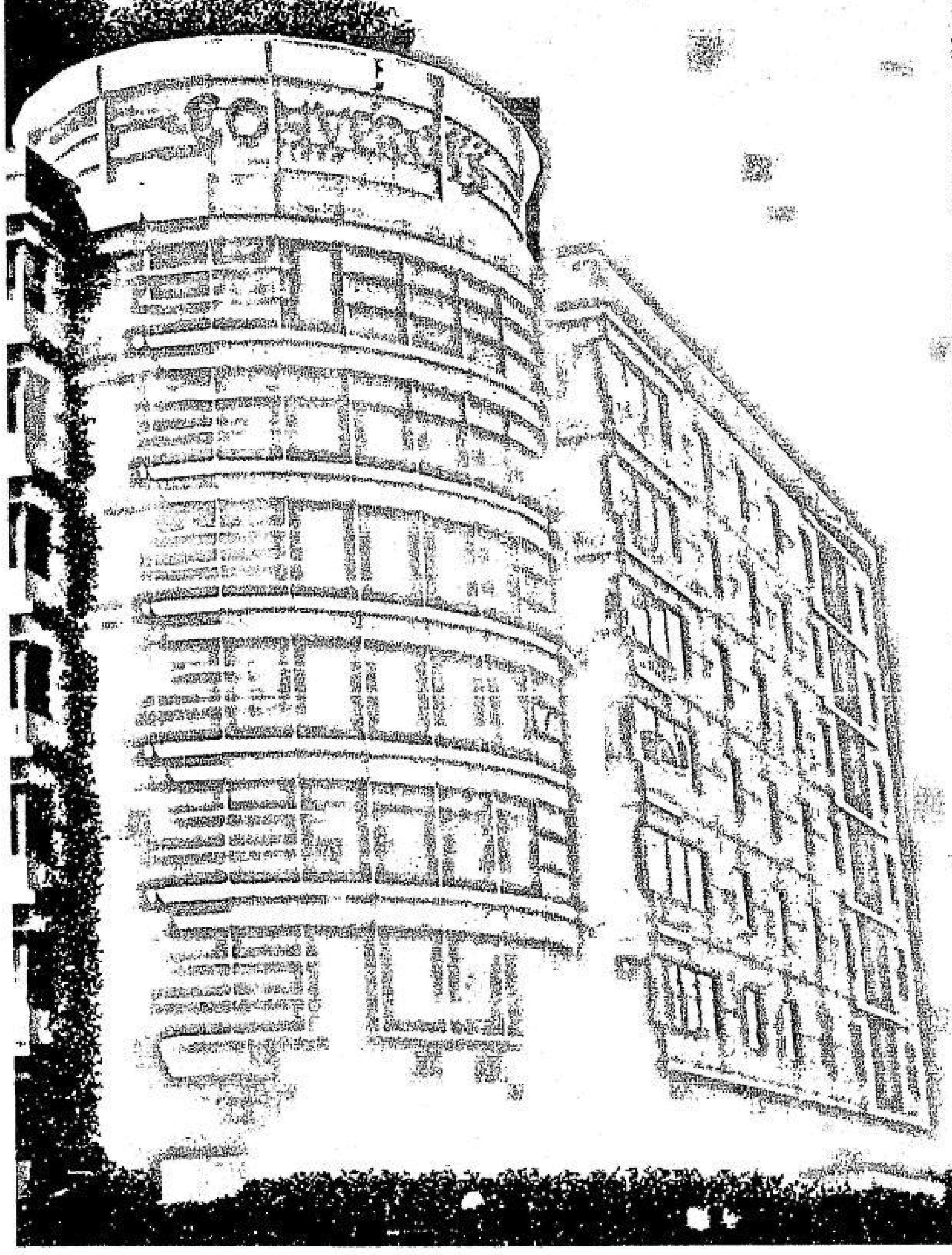
Alabang Office
Block 44 Northgate
Cyberzone,
Muntinlupa City
(02)758-1688

Makati Office
Convergys One, 6796
Ayala Ave. cor.
Salcedo St. Legaspi
Village, Makati City
(02)756-7188

U-Belt Office
Level 1, St. Thomas Square
1150 Espana Boulevard
cor. Padre Campa St.
Sampaloc, Manila
(02)735-2006

Ortigas Office
24th Floor Robinsons
Equitable Tower, 4
ADB Avenue Ortigas
Center, Pasig City
(02)857-7678

Cebu Office
R. Arcenas St.
Arcenas Estate
Banawa Hills
Cebu City
(032)416-5810



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- Multiple account management is an advantage
- College Degree is required
- Must possess excellent English and Communication Skills
- A strong understanding of US culture and business practices is expected
- Can do and Will Do attitude a must

CALL CENTER SUPERVISOR

- At least 6 months experience as a Team Leader or Supervisor is required
- Strong oral and written English skills are expected
- Knowledge of call center analytics
- College Degree or Commensurate Experience is required

QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSOCIATE

- Strong oral and written English communication skills
- College Degree or Commensurate Experience is required
- At least 6 months experience in similar capacity required
- Expert knowledge in quality, sales and customer service process

CALL CENTER REPRESENTATIVE

- Strong oral and written English communication skills
- College Degree or Commensurate Experience is required
- Customer Service or Sales Experience an Advantage

COMMUNICATIONS AND PRODUCT TRAINER

- Strong oral and written English communication skills
- College Degree or Commensurate Experience expected
- At least 1 year experience in similar field required

HR SUPERVISORS

- Strong oral and written English communication skills
- College Degree required
- At least 1 year in a supervisory capacity an advantage
- HRIS, Benefits Management, Employee Relations experience expected
- Proactive self starters needed

OTHER POSITIONS

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
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ELECTRO-MECHANICAL TECHNICIAN
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ICRC

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

The ICRC delegation is looking for suitable candidates to be based in Davao City to fill the following vacancy:

MEDICAL FIELD OFFICER (MFO)

Main tasks:
The MFO will work directly under the supervision of the Expatriate Delegate to perform the following medical programs in Mindanao covered by ICRC's mandate and mission:

- Medical assistance to victims of war and violent incidents on an individual basis.
- Health assessment and intervention in the detention program and for displaced population

Selection requirements:

- Preferably a **Medical Doctor**
- Additional public health degree is an advantage.
- Practical experience in the medical field, and in working with the administration of health and medical structures of the Philippines.
- Good command of English, Tagalog and Visayan dialects (written and spoken)
- Basic knowledge in computer (MS Word, Excel & Power point)
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to develop a network of contacts.
- Reliable and organized person able to achieve proper follow-up of cases and accurate management of files/ records
- Flexible and open-minded personality.
- Good working spirit and ability to work in an international and multi-disciplinary team
- Ability to travel extensively within Mindanao
- With driving experience and valid driver's license

Assets:

- Previous work experience with the humanitarian organization
- Familiar in Mindanao geographical areas and cultural context
- Familiar with the work of the Red Cross in general
- Able to speak in Muslim dialect

What we offer:

- An opportunity to help victims
- Interesting, rewarding work
- Humanitarian and International environment
- Good Compensation

Qualified applicants are requested to submit their comprehensive resume, recent NBI clearance and explain in their covering letter their motivation and interest in the position as well as salary expectation to the address below not later than January 09, 2007 to:

The Administrator, ICRC, 4th floor, Central Plaza 1 Bldg., J. P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, 8000 Davao City, Philippines. Or by email to: icrcdavao@yahoo.com.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

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RP to aim for 'brain gain' from global OFW deployment

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY Arturo D. Brion said the Philippines is working to turn the global deployment of documented OFWs, which has surpassed more than 1 million in more than 190 host economies worldwide for the first time in 2006, into a source of "brain gain" for the country.

Brion has thus urged business, and other concerned sectors, to be the partner of the government in ensuring that global OFW deployment translates into 'brain gain' for the country.

Brion, speaking during the 6th Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Research Conference led by the Institute for Labor Studies, bared that he, and Philippine Business for Social Progress Chair (PBSP) Manuel V. Pangilinan, have recently discussed the possibility of assisting OFWs in becoming assets of development on their return.

"During this discussion, I broached to Pangilinan, the Chair of the board of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Corp, the importance of businessmen who can take care of our OFWs, particularly those skilled in science, economics, business, and other disciplines, on their return to the Philippines," he said.

The labor chief added that these developments are in light of the emphasis on "Brain Gain" by the Geneva, Switzerland-based International Organization for Migration (IOM).

"The IOM, which considers the Philippines' global migration management system as a model for the world, believes that migrants who have developed and improved their skills abroad can be catalysts of brain gain by transferring and infusing knowledge, skills, and technology into their countries of origin," Brion said.

He cited that the IOM's recent 92nd session and high-level discussion in Geneva focused on global migration management based on the Philippines' role as the leading source of productive workers for today's global economy. The event reflected international and local developments in policy and perspective on global migration both among OFW host and receiving economies amidst the pursuit of the United Nations' (UN) Millennium Development Goals.

Brion, in a related development, said that Taiwan, a major host country of OFWs, is helping to make 'brain gain' become a reality by initiating a databank of OFW returnees, who have worked for six years in Taiwan, for potential engagement by Taiwanese job-friendly investors in the Clark and Subic special economic zones in the Philippines.

"Taiwan considers the return to the Philippines of OFWs who have worked for six years there – the maximum period allowed by that host country – as its very own loss or brain drain. Their inclusion in this databank upon their return will help to ensure these OFWs' continuing productivity – proving to be a brain gain for both the OFW host and origin economy," Brion said.

GRMS

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(Al-Khobar, KSA)

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- **LINEMEN FOR HIGH VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINE WORKS**: 5 years experience in HV transmission line stringing works preferably in gulf.
- **SHUTTERING CARPENTERS**: able to read drawings/sketches.
- **STEEL FIXTURES**: able to read drawings must be able to climb towers and higher elevation
- **TENSIONER OPERATOR FOR HV T/L WORKS**: 5 years experience in HV transmission line stringing works must have operated similar machine preferably in middle east.
- **PULLER OPERATOR FOR HV T/L WORKS**: 5 years experience in HV transmission line stringing works must have operated similar machine preferably in Arabian Gulf
- **SAGMAN FOR HV T/L WORKS**: 5 years experience in HV transmission line stringing works must have worked as a sagman preferably in gulf.
- **INDUSTRIAL AND SUBSTATION ELECTRICIANS**: pass in matriculation and or vocational training course must have practical experience of 6 months to 1 year in industry or substation.
- **HELPERS FOR TRANSMISSION LINE AND CIVIL WORKS**: passed matriculation or equivalent, to climb towers .
- **WELDERS**: must be a certified 6G welder with ability to read and understand fabrication drawings. Experience in carbon steel and aluminum
- **HYDRAULIC PUMP MECHANICS**: experience of 4 years in operation and breakdown maintenance of hydraulic machinery.
- **AUTO MOBILE MECHANICS**: 5 years proven experience in repair and overhauling of imported vehicles and diesel engines of construction equipments.
- **INSTRUMENTATION TECHNICIANS**: diploma or vocational training certificates in instrumentation, must be able to read and understand drawings including loop check, etc, should have experience in installation and calibration of all types of instruments related to pressure, level, temperature, analyzers, control valves (MOV), pneumatic system, hydraulic systems, piping/ tubings, flow instruments, OLC, SCADA, , ESD, DSC system.
- **GENERAL FOREMAN**: experience before in any gulf countries leading a work force of at least 50, must have a technical background with diploma/vocational certificates, must be able to read and understand drawings.
- **QC MANAGER**: must have a university degree or equivalent of 7 years inspection experience or diploma with 10 years inspection experience and have a minimum of 3 years directly related to supervision of construction activities. (e.g. oil, gas, and petrochemical projects, infrastructure. communications).
- **QA/QC ENGINEER (CIVIL, ELECTRICAL MECHANICAL)**: must have a university degree or equivalent of 7 years inspection experience or diploma of 10 years inspection experience and have a minimum of 3 years directly related to supervision of construction activities on the contract scope of work (e.g oil, gas and petrochemical projects, infrastructure, communications).
- **PLANNING ENGINEER**: degree in civil, electrical, mechanical with excellent in primavera and ms project, should have proven experience of at least having worked in 2 major projects.
- **QC INSPECTOR (ELECTRICAL, CIVIL, MECHANICAL)**: college degree min. of 5 years inspection experience, operate with min. supervision, familiar with industry standards related to his specialty.
- **SECRETARY**: graduate with good personality, communication skills, computer literate, able to prepare official correspondence with 2 years working experience in office or projects.
- **AUTO CAD/MICRO STATION OPERATORS**: vocational course/ IT diploma 2 years experience in AUTO CAD and Micro station, having worked in any design or projects office for drawing preparations
- **CRANE OPERATOR**: with heavy driver licensed, proven experience in operation and maintenance of cranes up to 50 tons, Gulf or ARAMCO approval will be considered as an advantage.
- **COMPUTER PROGRAMMER**: BSC/ MCA in computer application, at least 2 years experience in maintenance of LAN and development of software..
- **SAFETY OFFICER**: graduate in safety orientation training with 3 years experience as approved safety engineer in oil, gas and petrochemical plants.

EMIRATES GLASS AND LUMIGLASS INDUSTRIES DUBAI

(Dubai, UAE)

- **LAMINATION SPECIALIST**: male, mechanical degree or equivalent with 3-5 years experience in lamination, bending and related field of auto glass/ architecture manufacturing processing, with knowledge in AUTO CAD.
- **QUALITY MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE**: male / female, degree in ISO management and safety course certificates, with 3-5 years experience in ISO certified glass industry, and safety management experience a great advantage.
- **BULLET RESISTANT TECHNICIAN**: male, mechanical degree or equivalent 3-5 years experience in bullet resistant glass in autoglass/ architecture manufacturing processing.

Interested applicants are hereby directed to personally apply and bring (2) sets of updated comprehensive resumé with detailed jobs description, employment certifications, diploma, transcript of records, NBI clearance, passport, and 2 x 2 colored picture at 8th Floor King's Court 1 Bldg. 2129 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City. Tel. No. 811-2058 / 64 / 66. Fax No. 811-2172. E-mail address: globrec@philonline.com , globrec@pldtdsl.net

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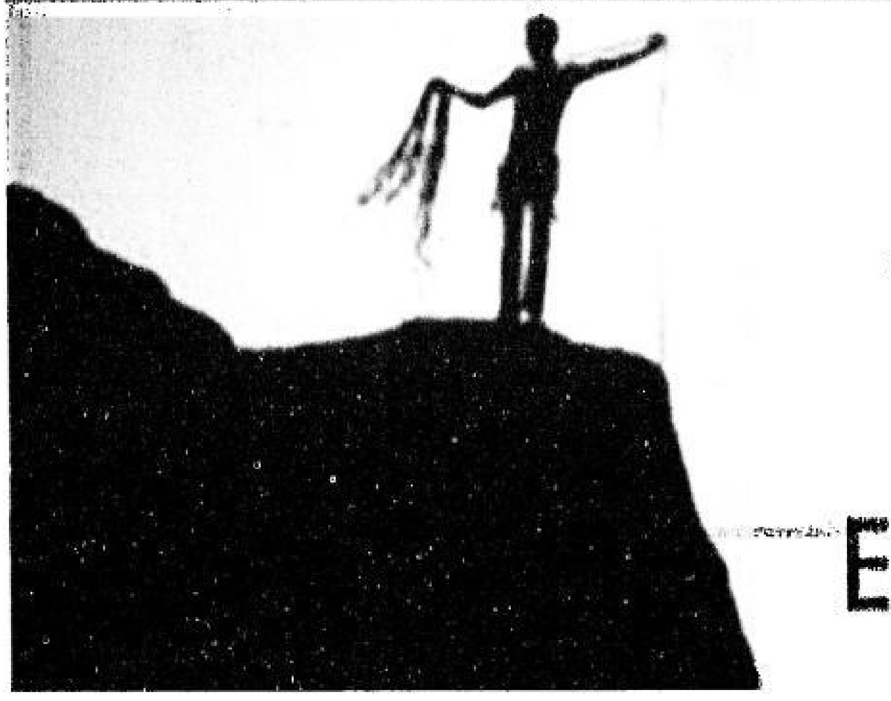

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Job Entailment:
The assistant instructor/trainer will be trained (train the trainer), in company systematic approaches/systems for further internal training provision to seafarers, in Manila training centre.
The assistant instructor/trainer is likewise expected to provide for time-to-time, shipboard internal training as well.

Qualifications:

The candidate should have experience in tankers possessing Master's license below 40 years old, positive attitude, strong drive and initiatives, goal oriented, excellent conversional ability, focused on team spirit.
Candidates must be fluent in English; interview(s) will be held only in English.
Previous training experience is an advantage.

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EASTERN OCEAN MARITIME CORPORATION
Room No: 103 Trinity Building
636 T.M. Kalaw Street, Ermita Manila

By means of e-mail to:
eastocean@broline.com

By means of fax to:
5229572

For additional information on the position, please call: **Captain Dango or Captain Isaac** on phone numbers: 4009402/4009403/5216025/4009409

SM
DEPARTMENT STORE
STA. ROSA

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

The successful candidate will be reporting to the Branch Operations Manager of the assigned branch and will be responsible for the over-all supervision of the efficient operation of electrical and mechanical equipment such as airconditioning, plumbing, sanitation and building facilities; will ensure the maintenance of cleanliness and attractiveness of the common areas in accordance to company standards and will lead the maintenance personnel in the operations.

- male; not over 35 years old
- graduate of Business Administration, Mechanical or Electrical Engineering
- with 2 years work experience in property management and building administration in the same capacity
- able to lead a group, prioritize work load and meet deadlines

DESIGN OFFICER

The ideal candidate will ensure proper maintenance of building and equipment; facilitate endorsement of service/maintenance works to the Mall Operations Department and ensure job implementation in accordance with the plans and specifications; obtain the actual area measurement (CFA) of all spaces both for retail and non-retails shops and conduct post project evaluation.

- female; not over 28 years old
- graduate of Architecture; preferably licensed
- knowledgeable in AutoCADD application
- with 1 year work experience in site inspection and supervision
- proficient in drafting, designing and estimates

SELLING SUPERVISOR

The successful candidate will be responsible for the planning, controlling and directing selling activities and personnel for the attainment of sales targets.

- male/female; not over 32 years old
- graduate of any 4-year Business course
- with 1 to 2 years experience in retail operations, food chains or in sales in the same capacity
- ability to carry out prompt and efficient customer service

Interested parties may apply personally from Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM at

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION
SM Sta. Rosa Department Store
National Road,-Barangay Tagapo, Sta. Rosa, Laguna

or email us at

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(Please bring comprehensive resume, 2 pcs. 2x2 colored picture with white background, SSS Number / SSS Employment History printout plus original and photocopy of Transcript of Records and Diploma)

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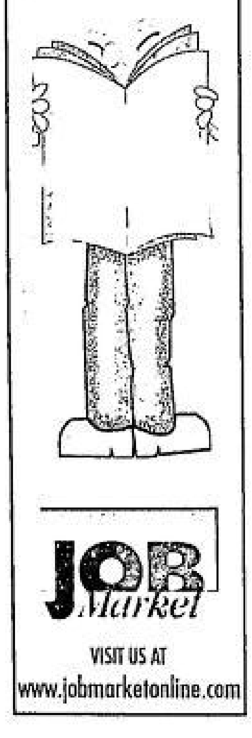

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JOB Market

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We provide customized solutions to clients in a diverse range of market segments, including financial, healthcare, commercial ,retail, utilities, education, technology, telecommunications, transportation, logistics and government.

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9AM - 5PM

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JOB Market

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As we celebrate IBM's 70th year in the Philippines, we invite you to be part of our continuous growth and solid presence.

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Qualifications

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- Process Trainer for Travel Account

Information Technology
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- Sr. Associates and Leads – Workforce

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WORKING PEOPLE

E-mail: workingpeople@inquirer.com.ph.

Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Text us your feedback: inquirer paw name/city/message. Send to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

‘How can I change my bad habits?’

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

I HAVE BEEN WORKING A long time, and I feel I am the last person to get promoted in our company. I asked our HR manager why my bosses do not recommend my promotion. Our HR manager counseled me and told me that I can still get promoted in the future. However, she said that my performance is being affected by certain bad habits.

At first, my reaction was that my bosses were taking it personal against me.

Our HR manager encouraged me to do some soul searching and commit to improve by discarding my bad habits.I want to have a great career and I want to discard my bad habits. Where do I begin? How can I simply discard habits that have been with me for a long time? Do I need professional help or can I do this alone?

Repentant

ASK YOUR CAREER COUNSELOR

Ernie O. Cecilia

I chose your letter among others because it’s another New Year—a time when people usually make resolutions, many people resolve to change.Sadly, however, quite a few make the same resolutions year after year.

Horace Mann said, “Habit is a cable. We weave a thread of it everyday, and at last we cannot break it.”

Habits are either good or bad. Good habits are like good servants—they help us. Bad habits are like bad masters—they can make our life miserable and stand in the way of our success.

Know your bad habits

It seems that everyone has bad habits so understand that you’re not alone.

But, just because you’re in good company, don’t ever think that it is all right to nurture your bad habits. The more successful people have learned to discard bad habits and learned new good ones.

If you want to break bad habits, the first thing to do is to know what they are. People don’t seem to realize what’s wrong with them. Bad habits, just like body odor, are not readily in the consciousness of their owner. Many bad habits are in the realm of the subconscious and have to be surfaced first before they are discarded.

You didn’t mention in your e-mail what your bad habits are. If you know them, they are easier to discard. It’s easier fighting the devil you know than the devil you don’t know. If you are not aware of your bad habits, make a thorough soul searching, as your HR manager suggested. You can also ask your friends about things you do that irritate them. Be careful about asking, because people tend to hesitate to break the bad news. You don’t easily find people who will tell you that you have bad breath.

William James has a good observation about asking feedback from friends. He said, “We all want our friends to tell us of our bad qualities. It is only the particular ass that does so that we can’t tolerate.”

Stop doing the habit

The next step is easier said than done. Whenever the temptation to repeat a bad habit comes, the usual thing people do is yield. That is the path to least resistance. They tend to justify by saying, “Just this once” or “What’s another one more? I’ve been doing this a thousand times.”

When you are aware of a particular habit and you want to discard it, start the change in your mind. People get frustrated when they see themselves doing bad habits over and over. Cicero observed that a habit is a sort of second nature. Unless you put your mind into stopping it, bad habits will tend to repeat themselves.

Techniques

Here are some things you can try. Write down a bad habit that you want to discard in an index card. Let that card remind you always not to do that habit.

Make some copies of your index cards and give it to friends or relatives you want to help you discard those habits. Tell them to stop you when you are about to do the bad habits again or to call your attention when they see you doing them.

Try these techniques with simple bad habits, such as nail biting, starting a sentence with “Ahhhh,” etc. Then try the same techniques with more serious bad habits, such as smoking or alcoholism.

To make it more interesting, make a mental wager or bet with yourself.

Every time you catch yourself doing a bad habit, penalize or fine yourself.

If others catch you, reward them.

One day at a time

It is daunting to start by saying that you will forever stop a bad habit.

It usually doesn’t work that way. Mark Twain once said, “A habit cannot be tossed out the window. It must be coaxed down the stairs a step at a time.”

Instead of making a New Year’s resolution that you will forever give up a bad habit, just commit that you will stay away from it one day at a time.

Commit to that sacrifice of not indulging in a bad habit just for today.

When you wake up, include in your morning prayer a line that says, “...and Lord, please help me not to do this bad habit just today.”

It’s not going to be easy. But if you really want to change for the better, you can do it—one day at a time.

Concentration

People usually go back to old habits because these are second nature. If you want to break a habit, you need full concentration. Before you brush your teeth, tell yourself that you will not leave the toothpaste cap or faucet open. Be conscious of what you do while you brush. If you see the faucet open, close it—and you just kicked a bad habit that particular time. Repeat the drill—concentrate every time you are facing a difficult task of stopping a bad habit.

Again, start with habits that are easy to discard. Savor the little victories and go for the big kill—meet the more serious bad habits head on.

Another technique to get rid of a bad habit is to substitute it with a good one. If you feel like smoking, stop and look for something else more productive to do, such as writing a letter or sending a text message or e-mail to a faraway friend, or reading self-help books.

Replace bad with good

Erasmus once said, “A nail is driven out by another nail.” A habit is overcome by habit.

If you have the habit of indiscriminately criticizing others, start to praise people when you see them doing well. When you make praising people a habit, you’ll be surprised that your criticizing habit could slowly die a natural death.

If you are shy and are unhappy about that shyness, simply start making people comfortable with your presence. Stop being self-conscious—just have the genuine interest in others. As you develop the habit of showing concern for others, you’ll realize how your shyness disappears, your self-esteem increases, your popularity soars, and your happiness restored.

Just be careful of the habits you develop. If you can’t resist a habit, it soon becomes a necessity. Habits become a way of life.

In the words of Feodor Dostoevski, “It seems, in fact, as though the second half of a man’s life is made up of nothing but the habits he has accumulated during the first half.”

(The author is the president and CEO of EC Business Solutions and Career Center, a human resource consulting firm.)

Can we practice spirituality in the workplace?

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I THINK A person should live up to his basic spiritual beliefs also at work.

A person should not put in a compartment his faith and in another drawer his work or family life. I am the owner of a small company of around 30 people.

I am thinking of introducing spiritual practices in my company? What are the benefits of doing so? Are there dangers too? Is this a trend these days considering the increase of renewal groups in our society? Please advice me how to begin living spirituality in my company’s workplace,

Renewed Catholic

Thank you for your letter. You are right; a person is a holistic being who continually lives different aspects of his life. If he is able to integrate the different aspects around his values and spiritual beliefs, he is likely to find fulfillment and meaning in his work. And the opposite is true if a person lives with dissonance in his work life and spiritual life, he is likely to experience stress and tension at work.

As the owner of an enterprise, you are free to introduce and live spirituality in the workplace. We see and experience a lot of benefits. For example our company has publicly declared as part of our mission and values that we are a gospel-based company. From these statements we regularly measure how we are doing as a company.

What are the benefits? One is creating an environment of service and caring inside the enterprise. When people know that they work for a mission larger than simply financial rewards, they are able to overcome the desire for addressing their own personal needs at the expense of others.

Two is the ability to overcome stress and adversity. Employees are likely to cope better with difficulties and disappointments. Joys and victories are seen as God’s blessings. In our company every contract for training or consultancy work that we close, we ring a bell and say a prayer of thanks for God’s abiding love and providence. Spirituality at work keeps employees hopeful and optimistic, where burdens and worries are shared making the feeling lighter for everyone.

Three, spirituality strengthens the sense of community. People feel a sense of belonging and affiliation, their trust grows as they are able to reflect together on Scriptures for example and share experiences of work and life.

Four, spirituality gives people a sense of achievement, as they strive to do perfect work and develop their talents. Teams working together in unity and harmony become the rule. Mutual correction becomes a gift and feedback is accepted with humility and graciousness.

Our list of benefits is endless. But what are the dangers? One, role modeling has to be a conscious effort on the part of leaders. When leaders commit to living the beliefs, everyone follows. And the opposite is true.

When the leaders say one thing and act in another way, they lose credibility and people get disenchanted.

Two, make sure, you maintain respect for diversity. Different people today may live different spiritualities and religions. The company has to maintain esteem for believers of all faiths and religions. They must feel a sense of freedom to join or not to join the core community spiritual practices. No coercion must be exercised. In our company, during recruitment time we discuss our spiritual practices openly and we expect employees to respect them. We respect diversity of beliefs.

Three, make sure that spirituality is not used to manipulate people. One company I know go for spiritual practices during stressful CBA negotiations and drops all spiritual activities after the contract has been signed. Make sure spirituality is not used for utilitarian ends.

Spirituality in the workplace is now being examined or successfully practiced as a healthy workplace intervention by many companies. It has also helped build company morale and increase employee retention. Building a healthy culture of spirituality requires consistency of practices.

Here are some spirituality practices you can pursue:

You can get all employees together for morning prayers or closing day prayers.

You can also sing a song to uplift everyone.

You can read also the gospel for the day. Once a month you can do sharing of experiences trying to live a gospel verse for the month. This is most useful providing an opportunity for people to give informal feedback to one another.

In our company we do a one-day retreat before Holy Week and another day for Advent. Then once a month in our meetings, a person would share and discuss ways of living particular aspects aside from spirituality but still part of an integrated life such as health, relationships, communications, etc. We call this our rainbow life at work.

Go ahead with your plans but engage and involve employees from planning to implementation. You can decide on a few practices but be faithful to them until they become part of the corporate culture. Thank you and God bless.

(The author is CEO of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting, a training and consulting company.)

Not born to beg

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

“... The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.” Reading this line evoked in me images of child beggars who swooped down on motorists at intersections in Metro Manila last Christmas Day. They grew in number by the tenfold around that time, suddenly sprouting where there used to be none—like mushrooms after the rain or vultures flocking at the smell of rotting flesh. These children are in a sense workers, in that they go out there and try to make money using the working skill they have: looking pathetic. Theirs is a high risk job—darting in and out of traffic, exposing themselves to the elements—but they don’t have SSS benefits, accident insurance, etc. It’s simply a hand-to-mouth existence from day to day, depending on strangers’ generosity or qualms of conscience.

I ache to help those “child workers” but not in the way they want to be helped. I do the doable: I befriend them while waiting for the green light. I let them know I care though my caring is not expressed in alms. I ask them about their parents, school, what they want to be when they grow up, and then I tell them to go home. “Tell your parents somebody told you they should work harder for you, that you were not born to beg. You are whole and intelligent and you’ll even become better when you grow up, so stop begging now.” Their responses range from a blank stare to a submissive “Opo.” I drive on wishing I could just kidnap all of them and give them a new life starting with a good bath, a bowl of porridge, and an appetite for self-respect.

If you want to have a peep into a nation’s future, see how it is treating the least of its children today. In some countries, children are abducted to be brainwashed into becoming “freedom fighters,” gun toting murderers at age 12. Can a culture of begging nurture children to growth and strength and turn them from street smart to wise? *(E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila@yahoo.com)*

REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Gospel. Lk 2: 22-40

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Starting them young

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB, DD

THE TERSE DESCRIPTION OF THE GOSPEL ON THE CHILD JESUS’ growing up could give writers a wide room for the imagination. In fact, some scripts unapproved by the Catholic Church would depict a “wonder boy” Jesus doing extraordinary feats which would make Him something of an E.T. (extraterrestrial) being. But the fact that God “became man” would tell us that Jesus grew up like any ordinary Jewish boy in His time, doing the daily chores and helping Joseph and Mary in their work. As Joseph was a carpenter, the boy Jesus would have done some manual jobs with him. I believe that working and learning how to work were part of the growing years of the child Jesus.

This human and more realistic picture of the working boy Jesus would not only fit in with the “mind of God” in becoming one like us mortals; it could also inspire us in our efforts to accept the reality of work in our life as well as provide greater meaning and value to our daily labors and toils. The experiences of many successful people would affirm the importance of learning to work hard at a young age, which for others might be something condemnable as “child labor.” Some business tycoons started as newsboys or kids peddling simple wares and then grew up to become stronger and stronger in the trade or business. Some of our sports champions started as little kids either playing or working at the sport as “*pulot* boys” in tennis, young golf caddies, etc. As a boy, World Champion Manny Pacquiao joined boxing matches for betting adults, and that was how the boy earned his first boat fare for Manila.

The “working boy” Jesus would certainly like to “see” our youth follow His example. Teaching our kids and youth how to work like Jesus, could be an important part not only for their personal development but also for the progress of our society. *(E-mail the author at mfvg@skyinet.net)*

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Job summary
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Requirements
- Must be a Bachelor/College degree holder
- Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills with one of the following languages: English, Spanish or Japanese
- Customer service and/or sales experience an advantage
- Education and experience in the hospitality or IT industry an advantage
- Must be willing to work on a rotating shift
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply

* *Japanese-speaking CSR's must be a native speaker and will be working on day shift*

Reporting Analysts

Job summary
- Supports strategic and tactical marketing and business issues for global clients
- Provides analytical support on operational and program structure issues for marketing programs
- Provides analysis and reporting for ongoing and adhoc projects
- Assists in compiling lists of email and direct mail recipients based on statistical models built by senior consultants using SAS querying tool

Requirements
- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics or related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS and SQL
- Must be able to prioritize and handle multiple projects
- Must be able to communicate technical information to non-technical audiences
- Must be able to work with minimal supervision

Business Objects/SAS Analysts

Job summary
- Performs periodic updates on Business Objects Web Intelligence data
- Delivers regular Dashboard reports and Business Objects ad-hoc queries
- Provides analytical support on data issue researches

Requirements
- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics, Computer Science or any related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS, SQL and Business Objects
- Must be able to prioritize and handle multiple projects
- Must have good communication skills
- Must be able to work with minimal supervision

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UPGRADE 2007: The 17th UP Diliman job fair

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines Diliman Office of Counseling and Guidance and the U.P. Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants will be holding UPGRADE 2007, the 18th University Job Fair, from Jan. 22 to 26 at the Ang Bahay ng Alumni, UP Diliman Campus. Students, especially those who are graduating, from UP Diliman, UP Manila, UP Los Baños, UP Extension Program in Pampanga and other colleges and universities are invited to this grand event.

The organizers will gladly welcome any inquiries regarding this event through the following: Tel. No./Fax No.: 926.4162 or e-mail and send your resumes to upjobfair2007@gmail.com. You may also contact us through any of the following: 0927-3303691 (Beth), 0918-6160885 (DK), 0916-4460329 (Theresa), 0927-6064730 (Maila), 0917-6100684 (Kristy).

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Ibtikari, a dynamic and innovative design practice has recently secured a number of prestigious projects in the Middle East and therefore requires to recruit the following personnel in our Makati Office.

Lead Architects Ref "ibt.0501"

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Senior Architects Ref "ibt.0502"

The successful candidate will have a minimum of 10 years experience and be proficient in the execution of the projects. Experience in architectural and interior detailing is required, plus a good knowledge of local and international codes and standards.

3D Illustrators Ref "ibt.050.3"

With a minimum of 4 years post graduate experience, he or she must possess the ability to interpret from concept sketches and drawings then prepare full 3D visuals and flythroughs.

CAD Operators

A minimum of 5 years experience in either architecture or interior design or both detailing and working drawings. Proficiency in AutoCAD is essential.

Senior Interior Designers Ref "ibt.0505"

Cable of designing to the highest international standards, managing a number of projects from concept through to completion on site.

Interior Designer Ref "ibt.0506"

The successful candidate will have a minimum of 10 years experience and be proficient in the execution of the projects. Experience in interior detailing is required, plus a good knowledge of local and international codes and standards.

All candidates to clearly mark the reference number of the position applied for, on their application.

All applicants must be proficient in AutoCAD, Microsoft Office, and Microsoft Projects. A working knowledge of 3D Studio Max will be an advantage.

Competitive salaries commensurate with experience; will be offered to the successful candidates.

Recognized qualifications from an established university or college are essential.

Candidates should send their CVs to:

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P. O. Box 31110
Sharjah
United Arab Emirates
Email: Ibtikari@gmail.com

Australian Government
AusAID

PROGRAM OFFICER – DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is responsible for the delivery of Australia's Development Cooperation Program to the Philippines. AusAID is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) for several positions of **Program Officer (PO)** within the Development Cooperation Section of the Australian Embassy, Manila. The PO will contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of the development cooperation program through day-to-day management of ongoing activities and contracts, activity monitoring and reporting, quality policy input, and administrative support within a multi-functional cross cultural team.

Selection Criteria
The successful applicant will be a Filipino citizen with key qualifications such as good understanding of development issues and in-depth knowledge of key national and international agencies. Interested parties should have demonstrated contract management skills and effective work planning, organizing and resource management skills. Applicants should demonstrate a strong record of representational and interpersonal skills, including research and analytical skills. Experience and/or knowledge of program/project development and management, preferably in areas of either trade and private sector development, or rural development, health and education, or Mindanao and related regional peace and development issues, would be highly desirable.

Conditions of Contract
The Program Officer will be a full-time position available on a renewable two (2) year contract. The nominated person(s) are expected to commence within the next 6 months. The commencing salary is negotiable within the range of P50,000.00 – P56,000.00 per month depending upon qualifications and experience.

Expressions of Interest
Expressions of interest (one page), outlining briefly relevant experience and qualifications with reference to the duties and selection criteria for the position, should be sent to: **HR Officer, Development Cooperation Section, Australian Embassy, 23/F Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1200** or manila.recruitment@dfat.gov.au by close of business **(COB) 19 January 2007.** EOI should particularly address the qualities and attributes the applicant would bring to the position, if selected. Please include a curriculum vitae, and two (2) work-related referral letters (preferably from current supervisor and addressing the criteria). Do not send copies of academic transcripts, awards, degrees, or published papers. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Envelopes should be clearly marked "**PROGRAM OFFICER /AUSAID**". Only those selected for interview will have their applications acknowledged.

Interested applicants are encouraged to obtain a copy of the Job Specification, which is available by emailing manila.recruitment@dfat.gov.au.

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P125 wage hike to wreak havoc on economy—Ecop president-elect

THE EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION of the Philippines (Ecop) has voiced grave concern over the tremendous adverse and destructive consequences of the P125 across-the-board wage hike approved on third and final reading by the House of Representatives.

Ecop President-elect Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr. said such magnitude of an across-the-board legislated wage adjustment would wreak havoc on the country's fragile economy.

Ortiz-Luis said a legislated salary increase for all private sector workers which is not productivity-based, would cause a chain reaction of disastrous proportions, such as: unprecedented spiraling cost-push inflation. The cost of labor is one of the factors of production. If the cost of labor is unduly raised by mandated wage increases, then it would cost more to produce the same quantity of output and the increased cost is then passed on to the market. Companies which could not pass on the increased cost because of the competition offered by low-cost imports, will simply have to retrench or close shop; massive job losses and unemployment. As it is, the Philippines is experiencing the phenomenon of jobless-growth. Official statistics show that the only time that the economy was able to create more jobs than the addition to the labor force was in 1996. In 2005, only 699,000 new jobs were created; and minimal use of labor-intensive operations or technology in industry which will find it more cost efficient and productive in the long run to resort to automation, capital-intensive technology and the deployment of a small but highly-skilled workforce.

Expressing employers' vehement opposition to the legislated wage hike, Ortiz-Luis pointed out that there is no market economy in the world that would arbitrarily compel all enterprises, whether big or small, to grant an "excessive and unsustainable across-the-board pay increase to all their employees from the lowest rank to the top executives in complete disregard whatsoever to its effect on the viability of the individual enterprise and to the sanctity of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)."

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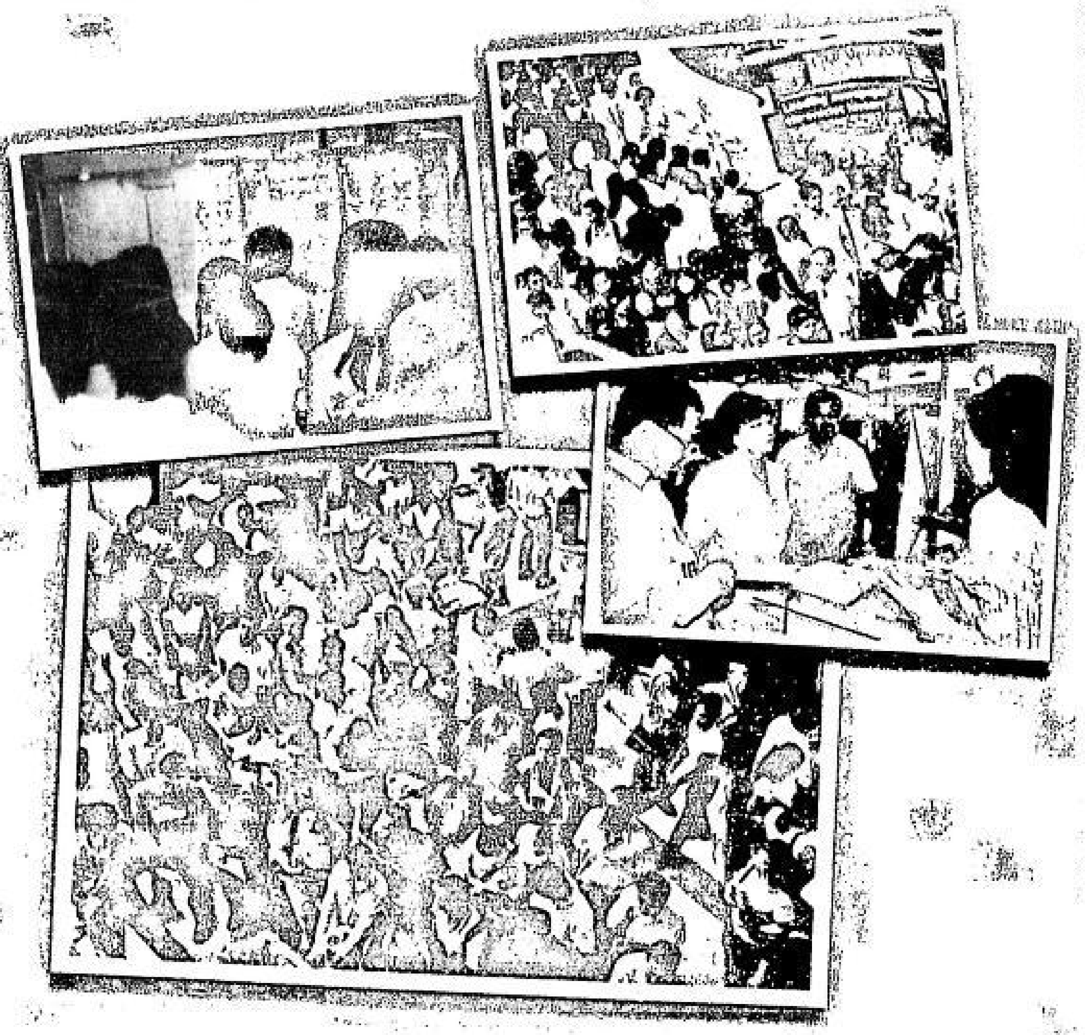

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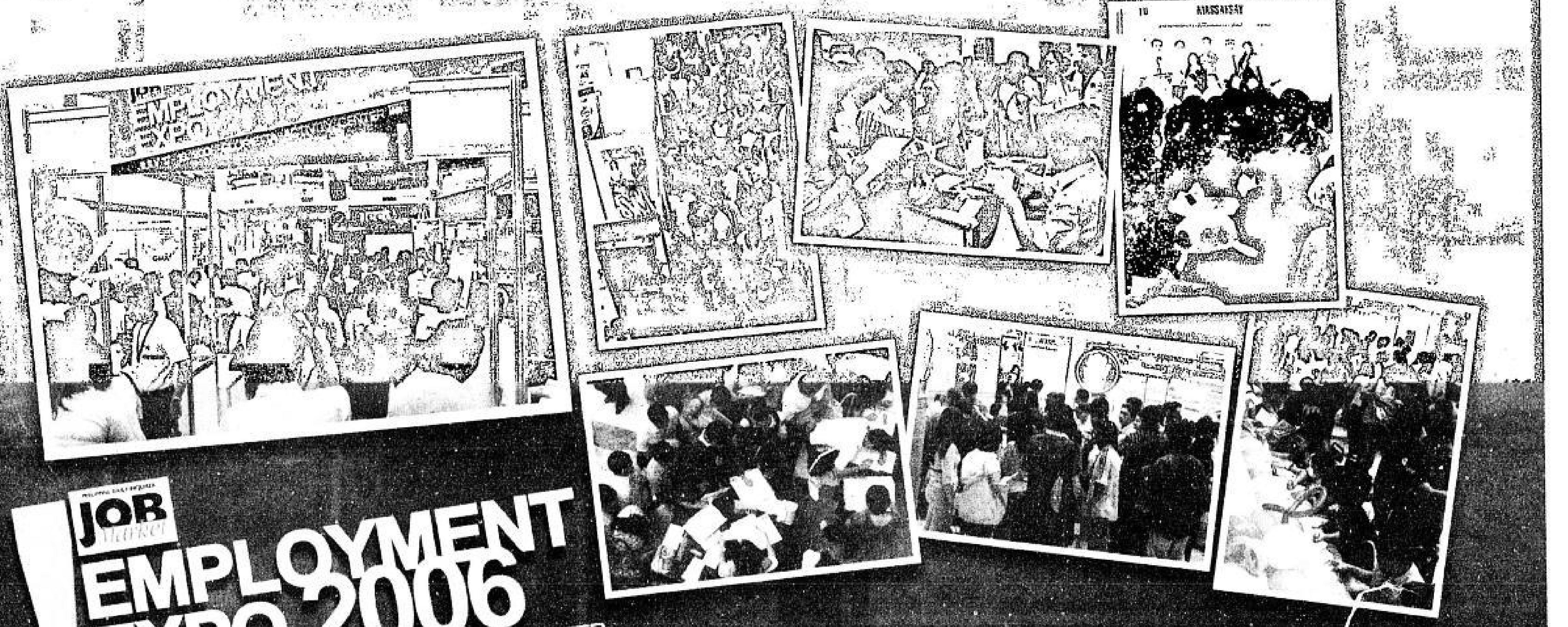

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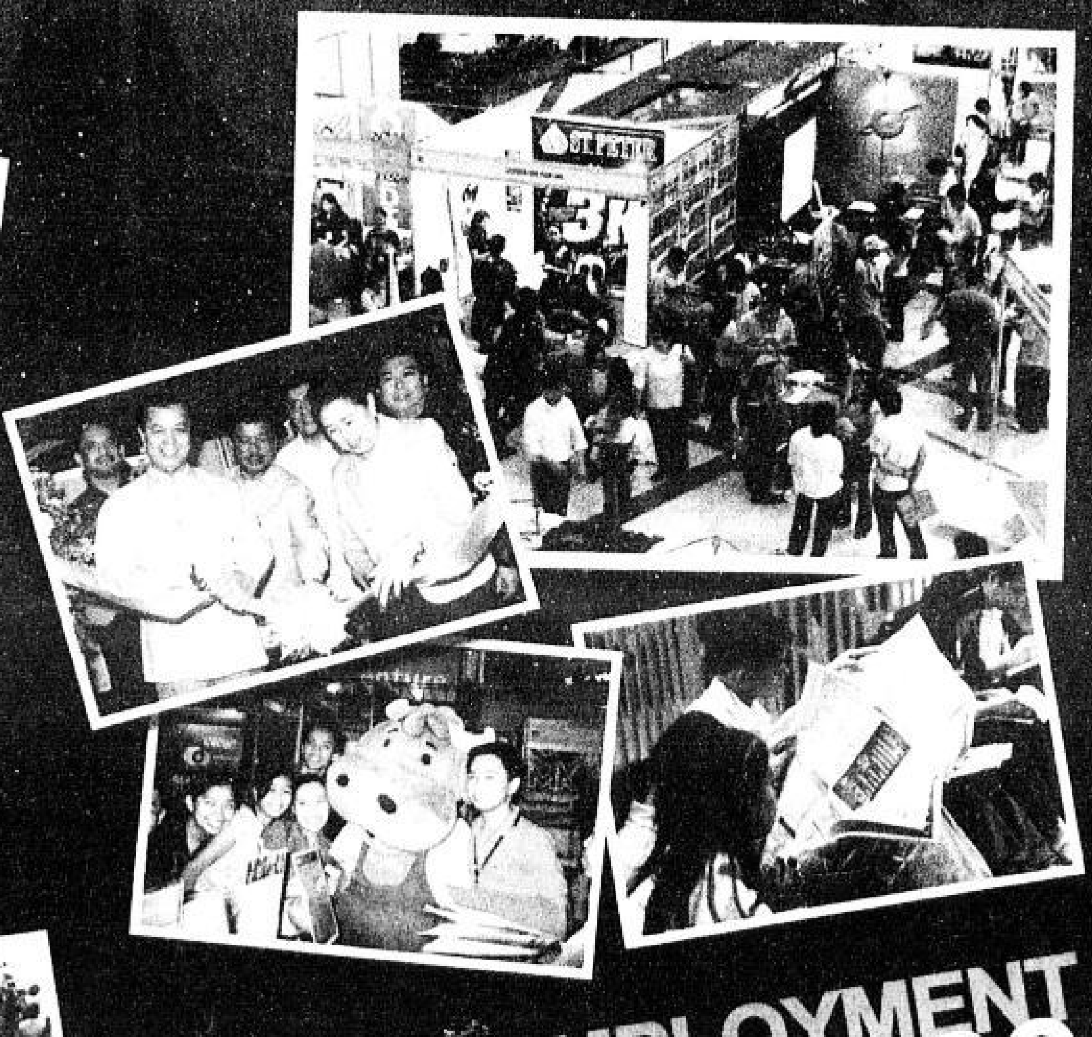

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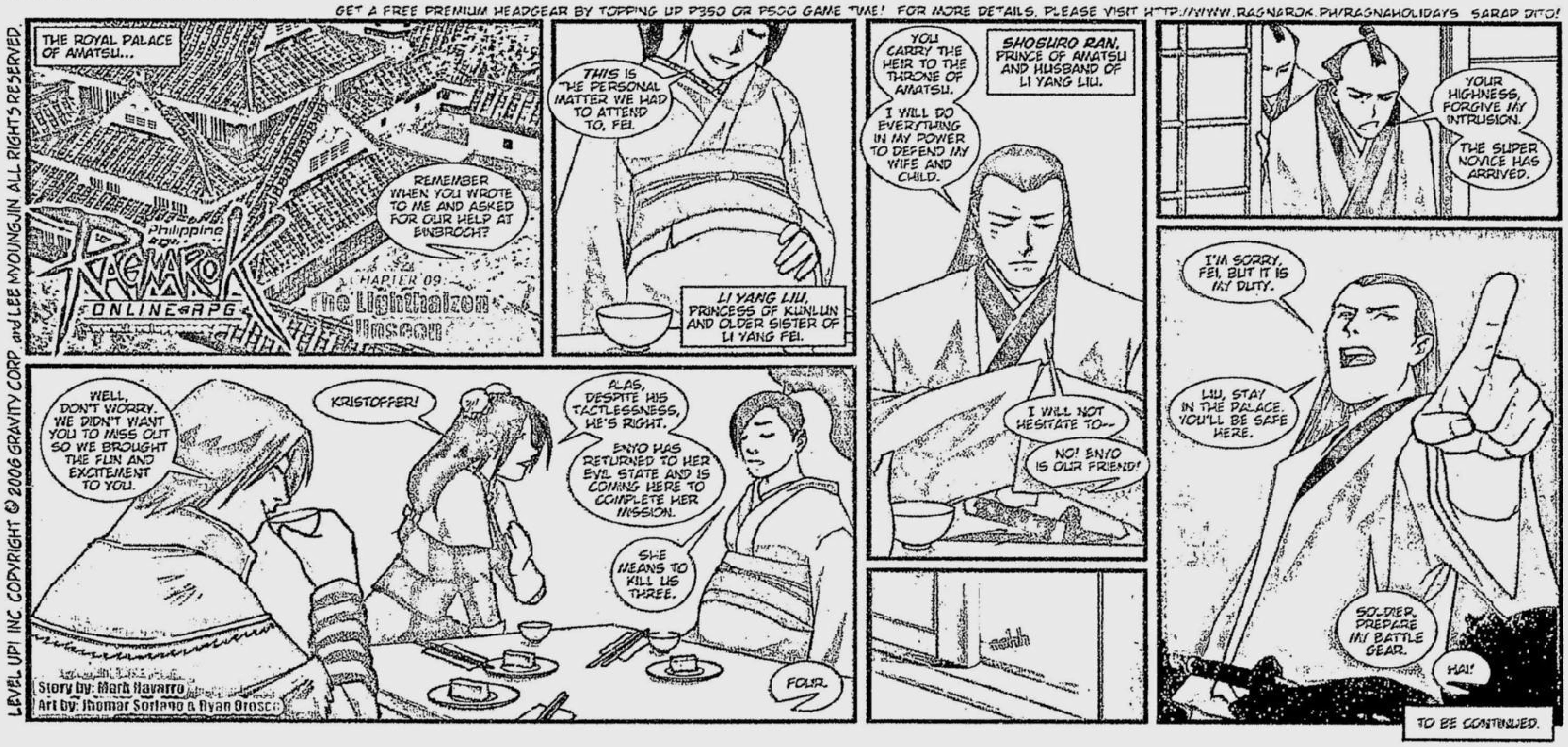
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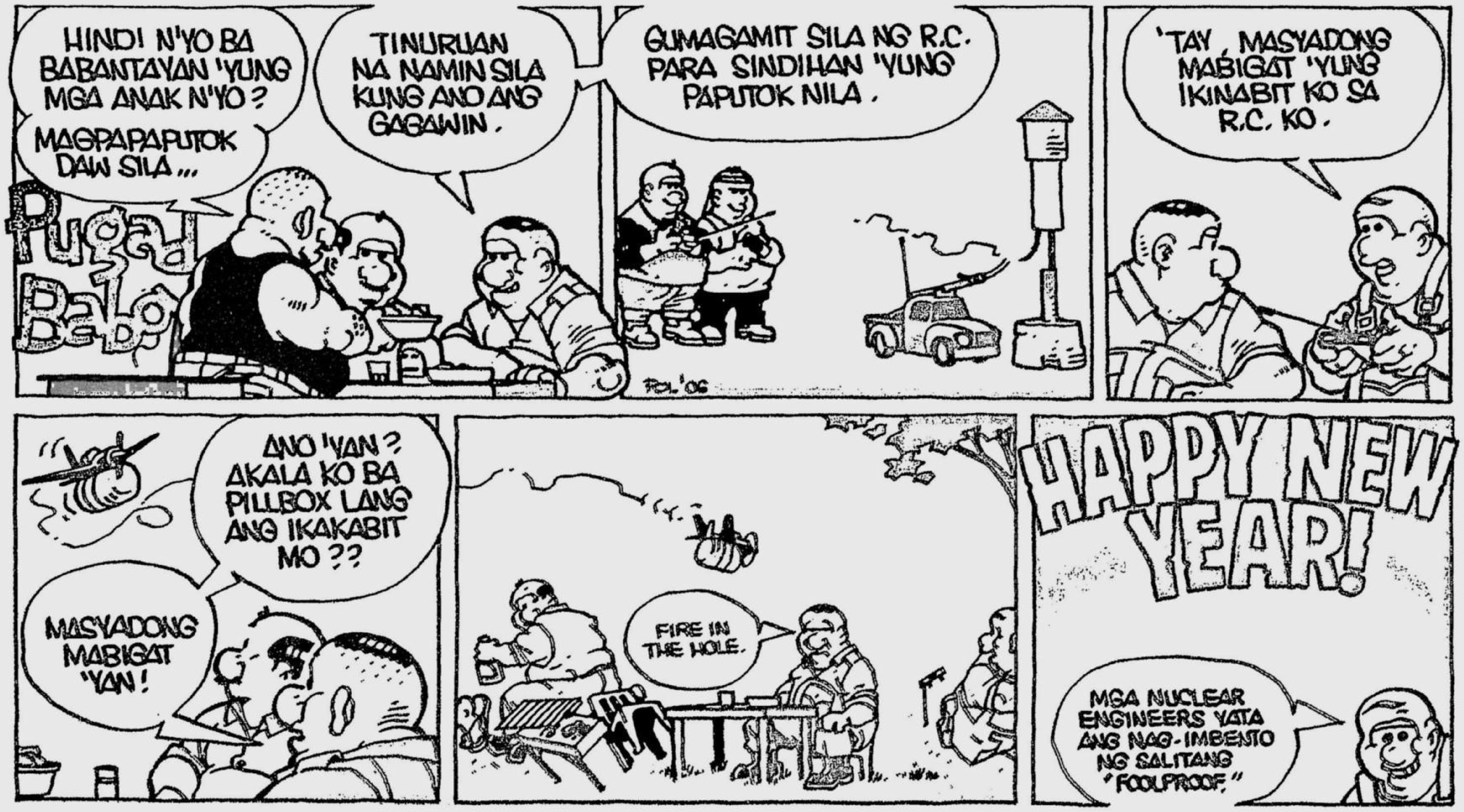
THE ROYAL PALACE OF AMATSU...
REMEMBER WHEN YOU WROTE TO ME AND ASKED FOR OUR HELP AT EINBROCH?
Philippine Ragnarok ONLINE RPG
CHAPTER 09: the Lighthalzen Unseen
THIS IS THE PERSONAL MATTER WE HAD TO ATTEND TO, FEI.
LI YANG LIU, PRINCESS OF KUNLUN AND OLDER SISTER OF LI YANG FEI.
YOU CARRY THE HEIR TO THE THRONE OF AMATSU.
SHOGURO RAN, PRINCE OF AMATSU AND HUSBAND OF LI YANG LIU.
I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO DEFEND MY WIFE AND CHILD.
I WILL NOT HESITATE TO--
NO! ENYO IS OUR FRIEND!
YOUR HIGHNESS, FORGIVE MY INTRUSION.
THE SUPER NOVICE HAS ARRIVED.
WELL, DON'T WORRY. WE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO MISS OUT SO WE BROUGHT THE FUN AND EXCITEMENT TO YOU.
KRISTOFFER!
ALAS, DESPITE HIS TACTLESSNESS, HE'S RIGHT.
ENYO HAS RETURNED TO HER EVIL STATE AND IS COMING HERE TO COMPLETE HER MISSION.
SHE MEANS TO KILL US THREE.
FOUR.
Story by: Mark Navarro
Art by: Jhomar Soriano & Ryan Orosco
aahh
I'M SORRY, FEI, BUT IT IS MY DUTY.
LIU, STAY IN THE PALACE. YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE.
SOLDIER, PREPARE MY BATTLE GEAR.
HAI!
TO BE CONTINUED.

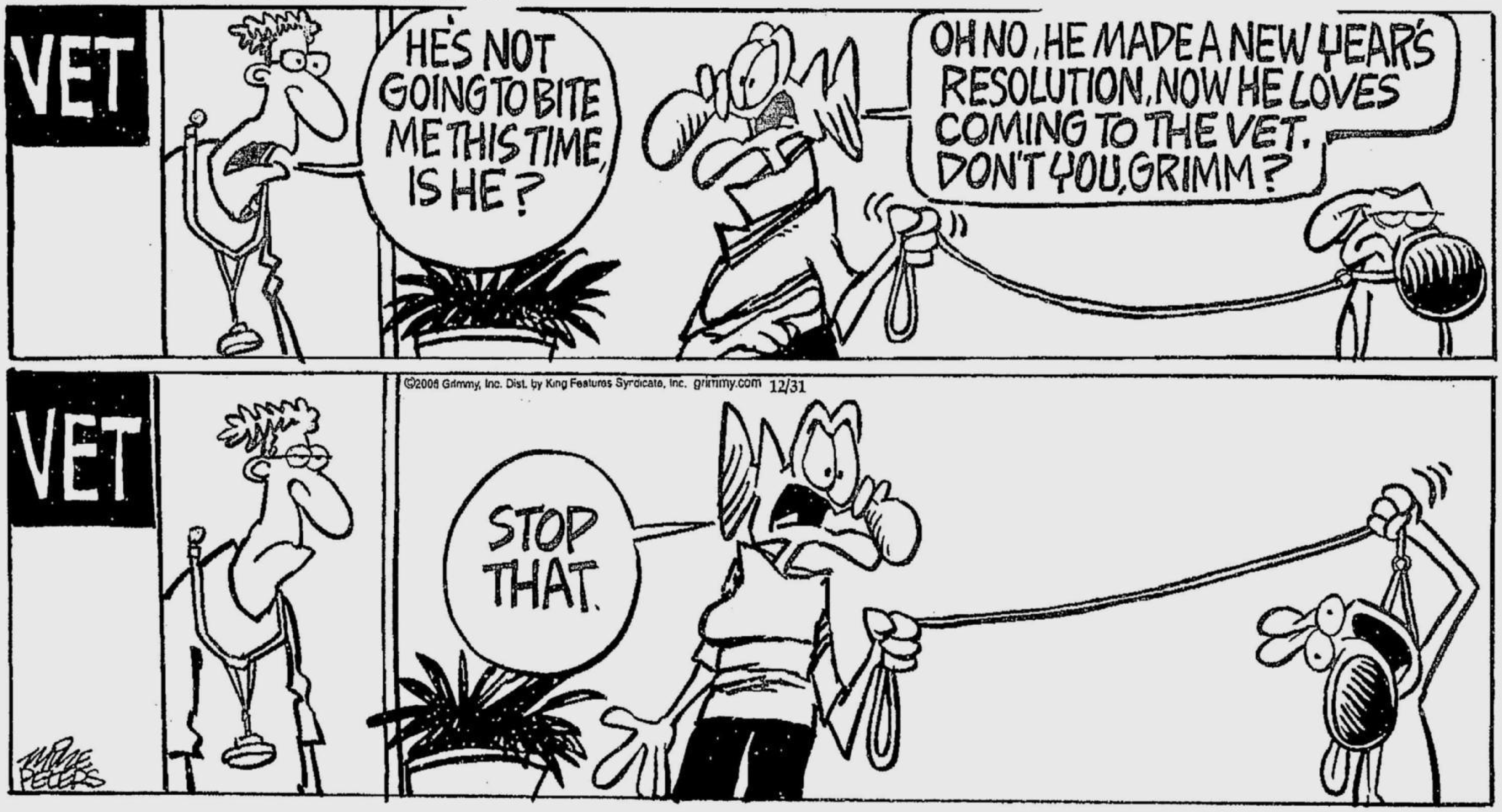
PUGAD BABOY

BY POL MEDINA JR.


HINDI N'YO BA BABANTAYAN 'YUNG MGA ANAK N'YO?
MAGPAPAPUTOK DAW SILA...
TINURUAN NA NAMIN SILA KUNG ANO ANG GAGAWIN.
Pugad Baboy
GUMAGAMIT SILA NG R.C. PARA SINDIHAN 'YUNG PAPUTOK NILA.
POL '06
'TAY, MASYADONG MABIGAT 'YUNG IKINABIT KO SA R.C. KO.
ANO 'YAN? AKALA KO BA PILLBOX LANG ANG IKAKABIT MO??
MASYADONG MABIGAT 'YAN!
FIRE IN THE HOLE.
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
MGA NUCLEAR ENGINEERS YATA ANG NAG-IMBENTO NG SALITANG "FOOLPROOF."

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


VET
HE'S NOT GOING TO BITE ME THIS TIME, IS HE?
OH NO, HE MADE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION. NOW HE LOVES COMING TO THE VET. DON'T YOU, GRIMM?
VET
STOP THAT.
MIKE PETERS
12/31

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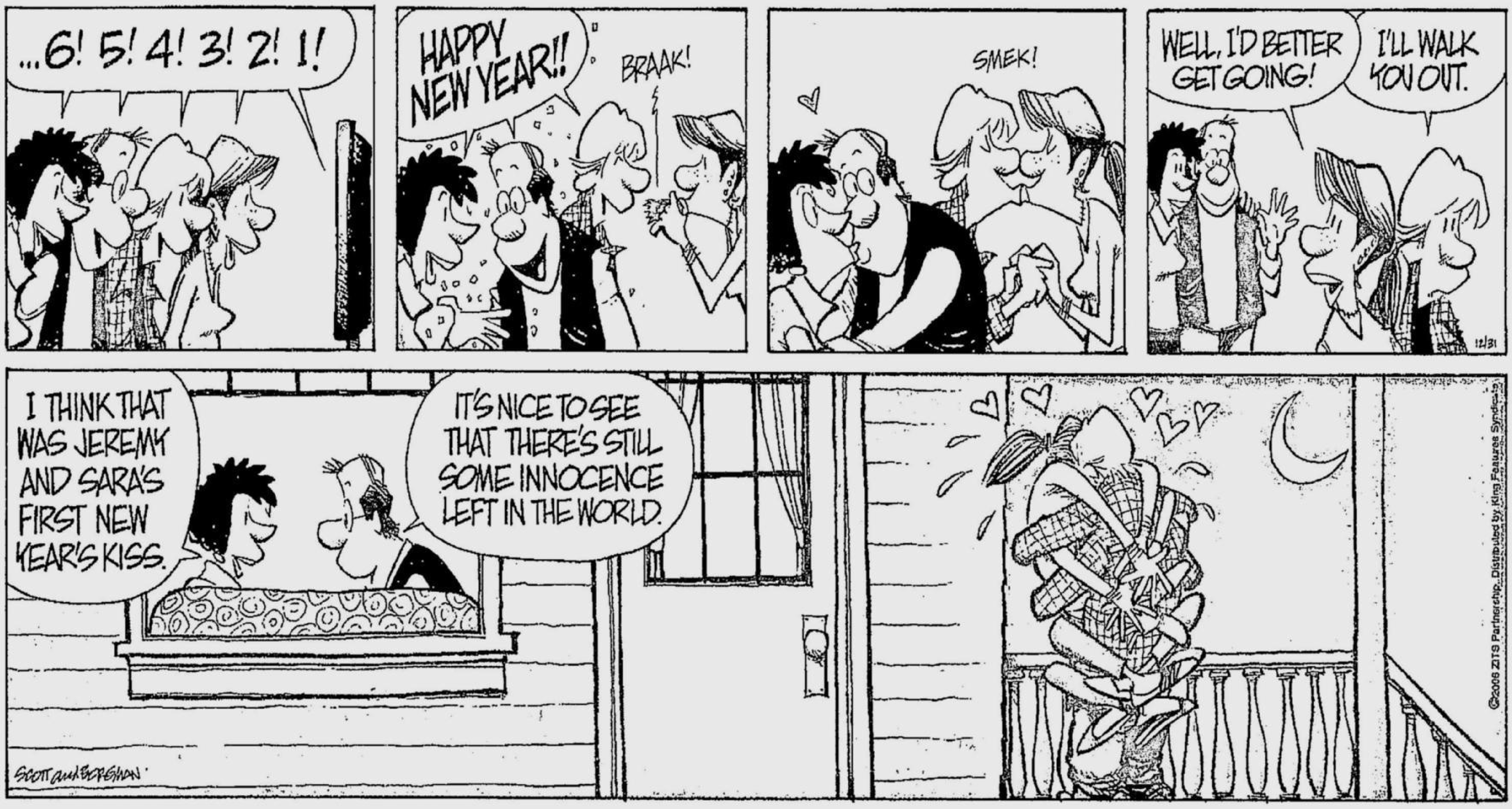
ZITS

BY JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN


...6! 5! 4! 3! 2! 1!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!
BRAAK!
SMEK!
WELL, I'D BETTER GET GOING!
I'LL WALK YOU OUT.
12/31
I THINK THAT WAS JEREMY AND SARA'S FIRST NEW YEAR'S KISS.
IT'S NICE TO SEE THAT THERE'S STILL SOME INNOCENCE LEFT IN THE WORLD.
SCOTT and BORGMAN

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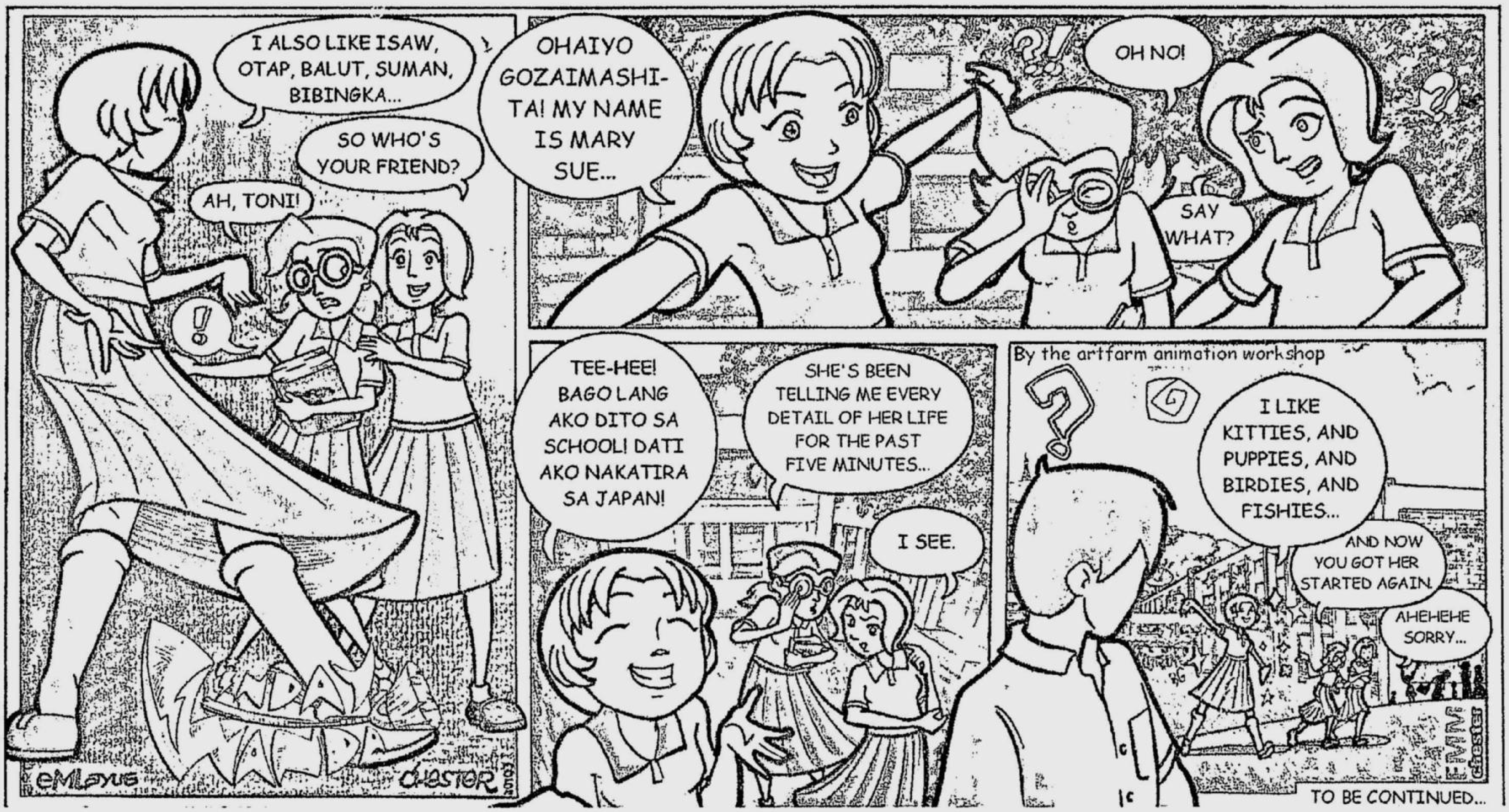
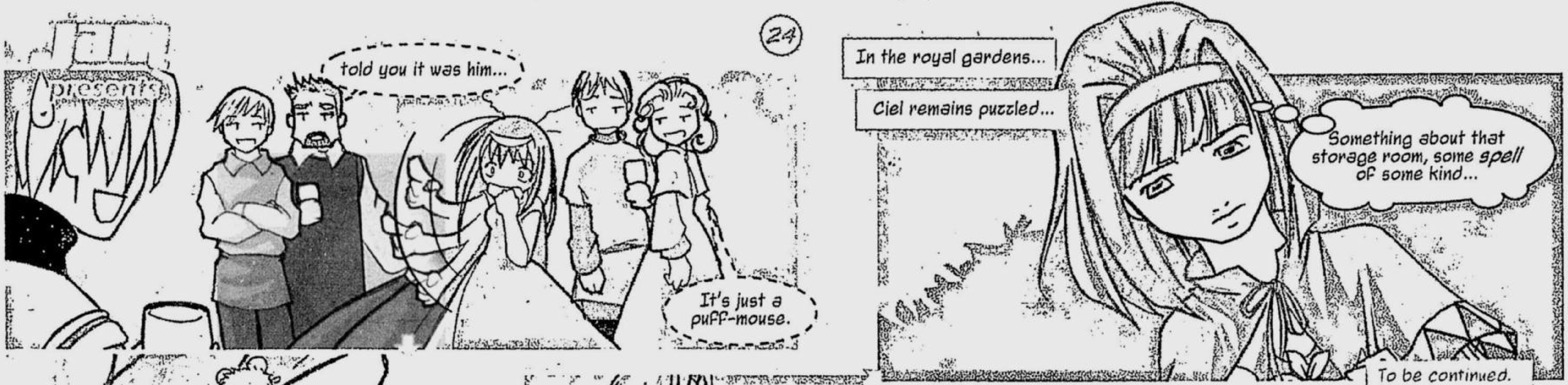
INDAY WANDA

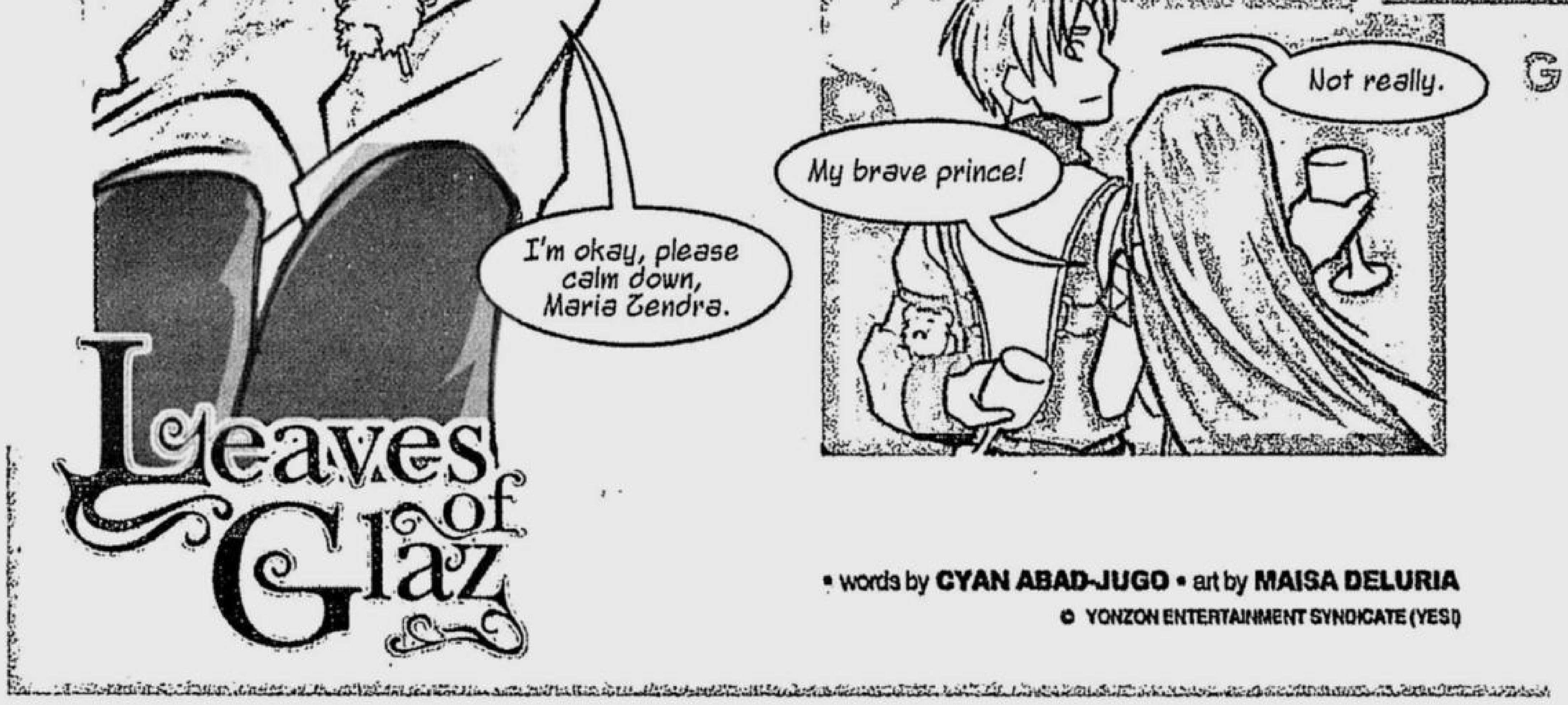
BY BLOG CALIGUIA


I ALSO LIKE ISAW, OTAP, BALUT, SUMAN, BIBINGKA...
SO WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?
AH, TONI!
!
INDAY WANDA
eMLayug
CHESTOR
OHAIYO GOZAIMASHI-TA! MY NAME IS MARY SUE...
OH NO!
SAY WHAT?
TEE-HEE! BAGO LANG AKO DITO SA SCHOOL! DATI AKO NAKATIRA SA JAPAN!
SHE'S BEEN TELLING ME EVERY DETAIL OF HER LIFE FOR THE PAST FIVE MINUTES...
I SEE.
By the artfarm animation workshop
I LIKE KITTIES, AND PUPPIES, AND BIRDIES, AND FISHIES...
AND NOW YOU GOT HER STARTED AGAIN.
AHEHEHE SORRY...
EMM chester
TO BE CONTINUED...

LEAVES OF GLAZ

BY MANGO COMICS


Jam presents
24
told you it was him...
It's just a puff-mouse.
In the royal gardens...
Ciel remains puzzled...
Something about that storage room, some *spell* of some kind...
To be continued.


I'm okay, please calm down, Maria Zendra.
Not really.
My brave prince!
Leaves of Glaz

• words by **CYAN ABAD-JUGO** • art by **MAISA DELURIA**

© YONZON ENTERTAINMENT SYNDICATE (YES!)

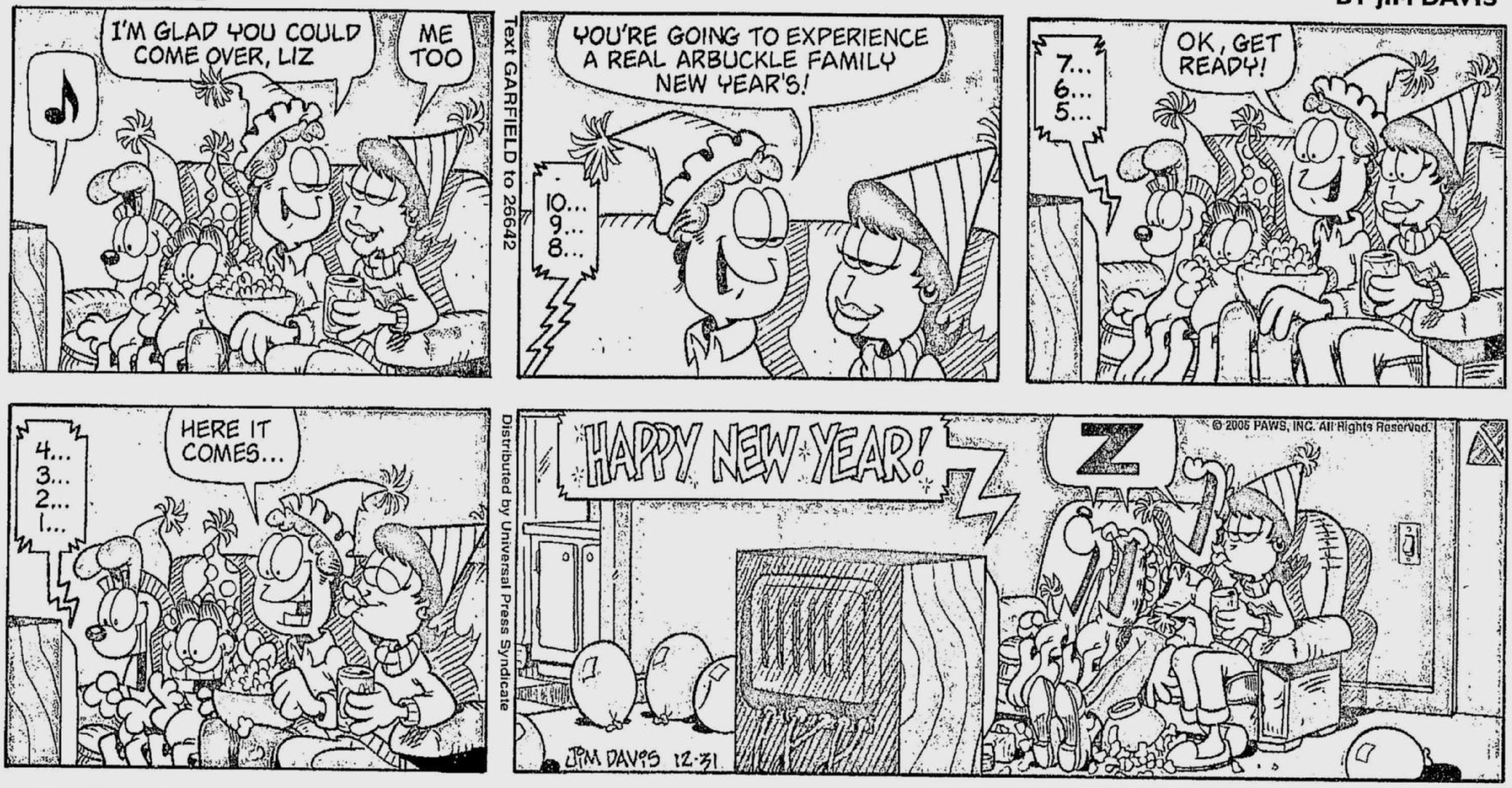
GIRL POWER MANGO JAM

AT YOUR FAVORITE BOOKSTORE, MAGAZINE SHOP

Meet the others...

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I'M GLAD YOU COULD COME OVER, LIZ
ME TOO
YOU'RE GOING TO EXPERIENCE A REAL ARBUCKLE FAMILY NEW YEAR'S!
10... 9... 8...
7... 6... 5...
OK, GET READY!
4... 3... 2... 1...
HERE IT COMES...
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Z
JIM DAVIS 12-31

Text GARFIELD to 26642

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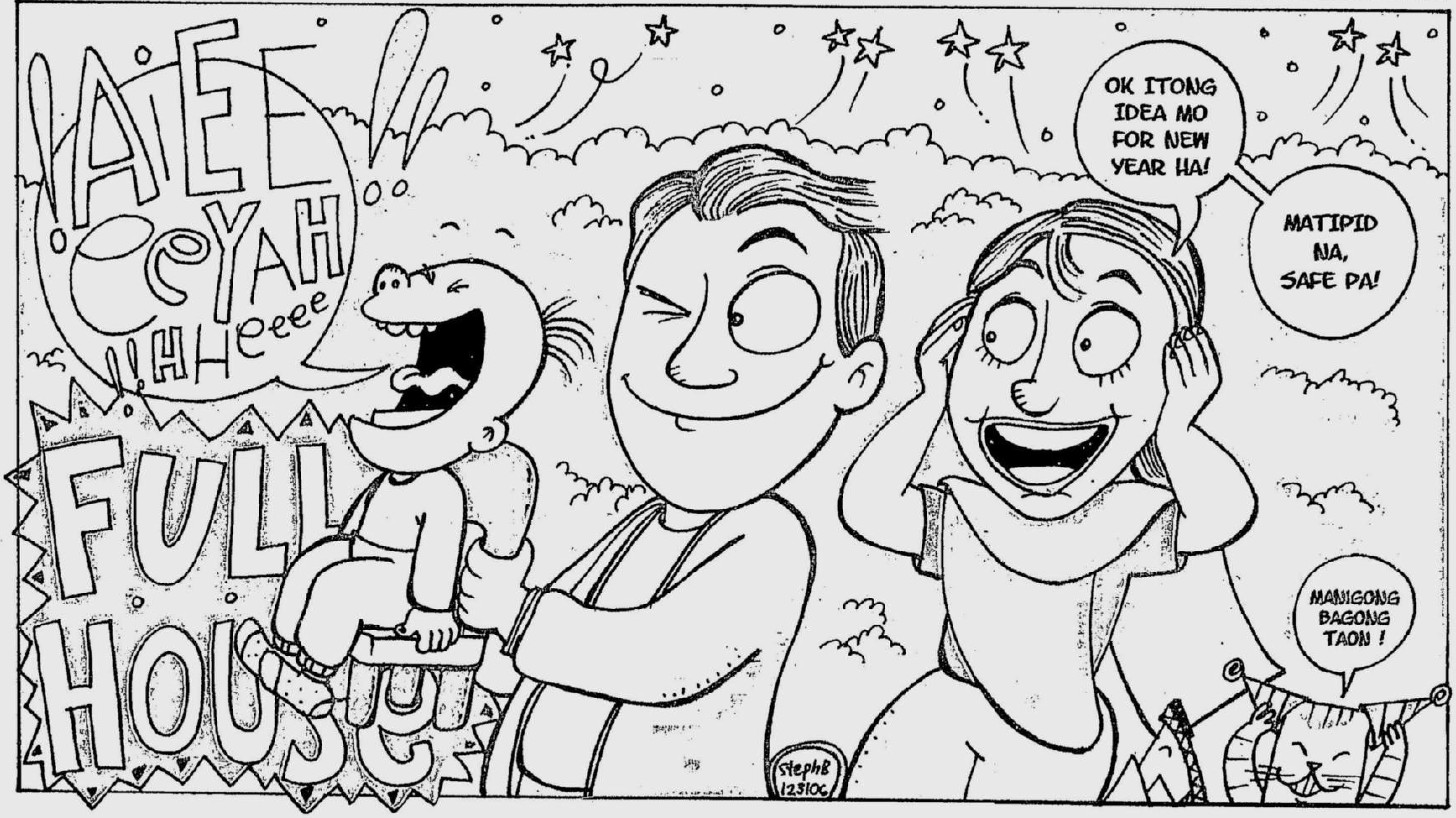
FULL HOUSE

BY STEPH BRAVO


AiEE CeYAH HHeeee!!
FULL HOUSE
OK ITONG IDEA MO FOR NEW YEAR HA!
MATIPID NA, SAFE PA!
MANIGONG BAGONG TAON!
stephB 123106

sundayINQUIRER magazine

December 31, 2006

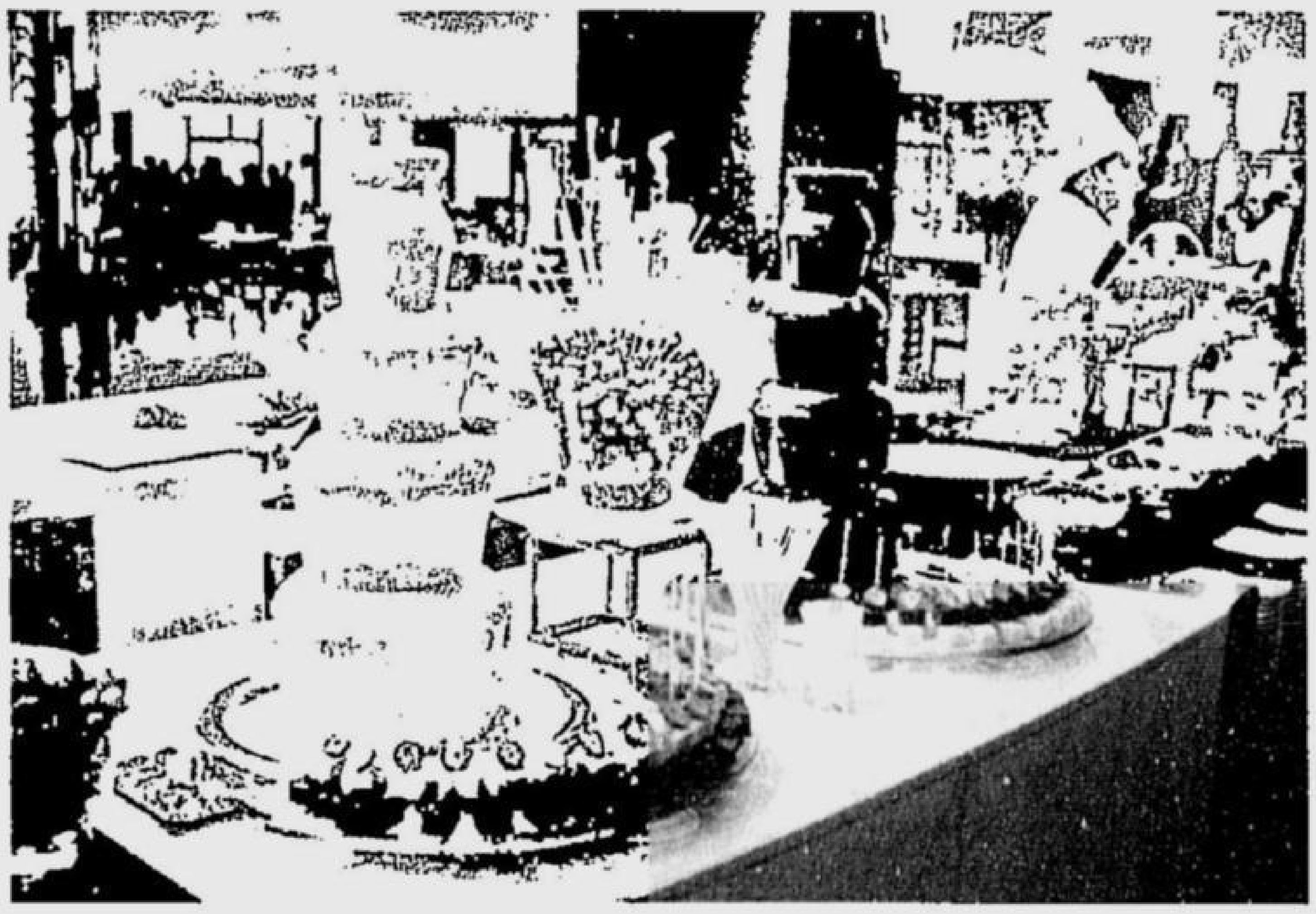
NEW WORD ORDER

Hear ye, hear ye: The Sunday Inquirer Magazine recalls the words to be remembered by in a year when tongues kept wagging and everything seemed to go a little wild

By Margaux Salcedo

A good food year

Fate could not have picked a better year for food writing, what with new restaurants mushrooming, and creative dishes getting their due



Indulge in the chocolate fountain at Spirals

AHH, the last page of 2006. Tomorrow, a new year.
The year 2006 will always be most memorable for me because this year gave birth to our lovely, glossy SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE and this little food column entitled Menu.

Fate could not have picked a better year for food writing. Attribute it to the real estate boom in spite of an ailing economy, but the Year of the Dog saw many a restaurant open and many a chef celebrated. Last week's column spoke of the new restaurants in the latest hip, happening place, Serendra.
Not too far from Serendra, another fine find, Chef Laudico Bistro Filipino, also opened this year at the Net2 Bldg. Then in the north are the many new places near the Eastwood and Ortigas areas and in the south, of course, the newly opened Mall of Asia.

With restaurants mushrooming everywhere, spotting food trends is quite the challenge. But I would say the common denominator was this: The Dog saw a stronger emphasis and greater dedication to creative dishes and quality food. Whether fast food or slow food, a heightened consciousness for cuisine has emerged that I believe should pave the way for the Philippines earning a more respectable place in the international culinary arena. It truly hurts my Pearl of the Orient pride when I see international best restaurant listings that include our Asian neighbors Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong, and sometimes even Indonesia and Thailand, without mention made of the Philippines at all. But with local competition thriving, our restaurants should soon find their place among the big players and receive the credit they deserve.
Here's a smorgasbord of some 2006 highlights:

Circles and Spirals
Shangri-La Hotel upped the ante in buffet services last year with Circles and set a new standard for hotel cafes. This year, a very aggressive Philippine Plaza hollered back with Spirals, a mansion of a restaurant with 2,500 square meters to seat 480 people. This resto-paradise includes eight stations of delightful selections including Indian, Chinese and Japanese cuisines. The dessert selection includes ... everything you can think of!

Foie Gras, Foie Gras Everywhere
With fine dining restaurants gaining in abundance, one amusing observation is the new fixation on foie gras. Maybe because the name rolling off the tongue sounds like aristocracy, it seems that the trend nowadays is to serve this liver specialty with various cuisines. The creative interpretations to this favorite French delicacy is quite impressive: from Pepato's goose liver creme brulee to Chef Ed Quimson's *balut* pate at Filos. And having become the sweetheart of appetizers, even stall owners at the Noel Bazaars or at the Salcedo Market (Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the park in Salcedo Village) are selling bottled versions, including the very Filipino bangus liver pate; Farah Tolentino-Ylagan even goes the extra mile by de-LIVER-ing (haha) this treat to your doorstep (check out her site http://www.lecanarddor.com/ or call 0918-9264671)!

Taking It to the Masses
Accessibility is usually a key factor in sales, and some word-of-mouth favorites finally gave in to The Malls. The Vargas Kitchen (of buttercake and *brazo* fame) has a little bazaar table at Food Choices of Glorietta IV, while La Cocina de Tita Moning (my personal favorite is the *queso de bola* spread) now has a kiosk at the Mall of Asia. I am just happy that these goodies are now easier to find!

The New Fast Food
It has been established that the regular burger is no longer the star—RICE is the shiznit. And this is evidenced by the new menus of all the leading fast food chains. Jollibee launched the Bangus Belly—with rice, of course—and everywhere now we see ads for the Arroz Cubana, which has ground beef and bananas—again, with rice. Meanwhile McDonald's this year launched its McRice Burger Beef Supreme. So I wouldn't be surprised if Starbucks started offering their coffee with rice (they actually do that in

(continued on page 12)

New Word Order

Hear ye, hear ye: The Sunday Inquirer Magazine recalls the words to be remembered by in a year when tongues kept wagging and everything seemed to go a little wild

WORDS took a walk on the wild side in 2006. The words in a president's emergency proclamation chilled spines, resurrected frightening shadows and ultimately ended up being dissected and autopsied long after the edict had been retired. A national icon unleashed fighting words as quick and effective as his admired fists. Words brought some from out of the closet and others into the bushes to answer the call of nature. The words joined hands and took to the streets again. Words failed us when so many were silenced forever due to disaster and a darkness seeped out into the waters of paradise. Just as a year seemed ready to end, the words formed a train out of the halls of lawmaking, only to be reined in by the warnings of others. The year to come brings another opportunity to mark our words, to have your say. It was a year of blood, oil, fierce water and tears of both laughter and lamentations. It was a year unlike any other. And who knows what awaits us in 2007. Let us celebrate what was said, now that all is said and done. - **Ruel S. De Vera**

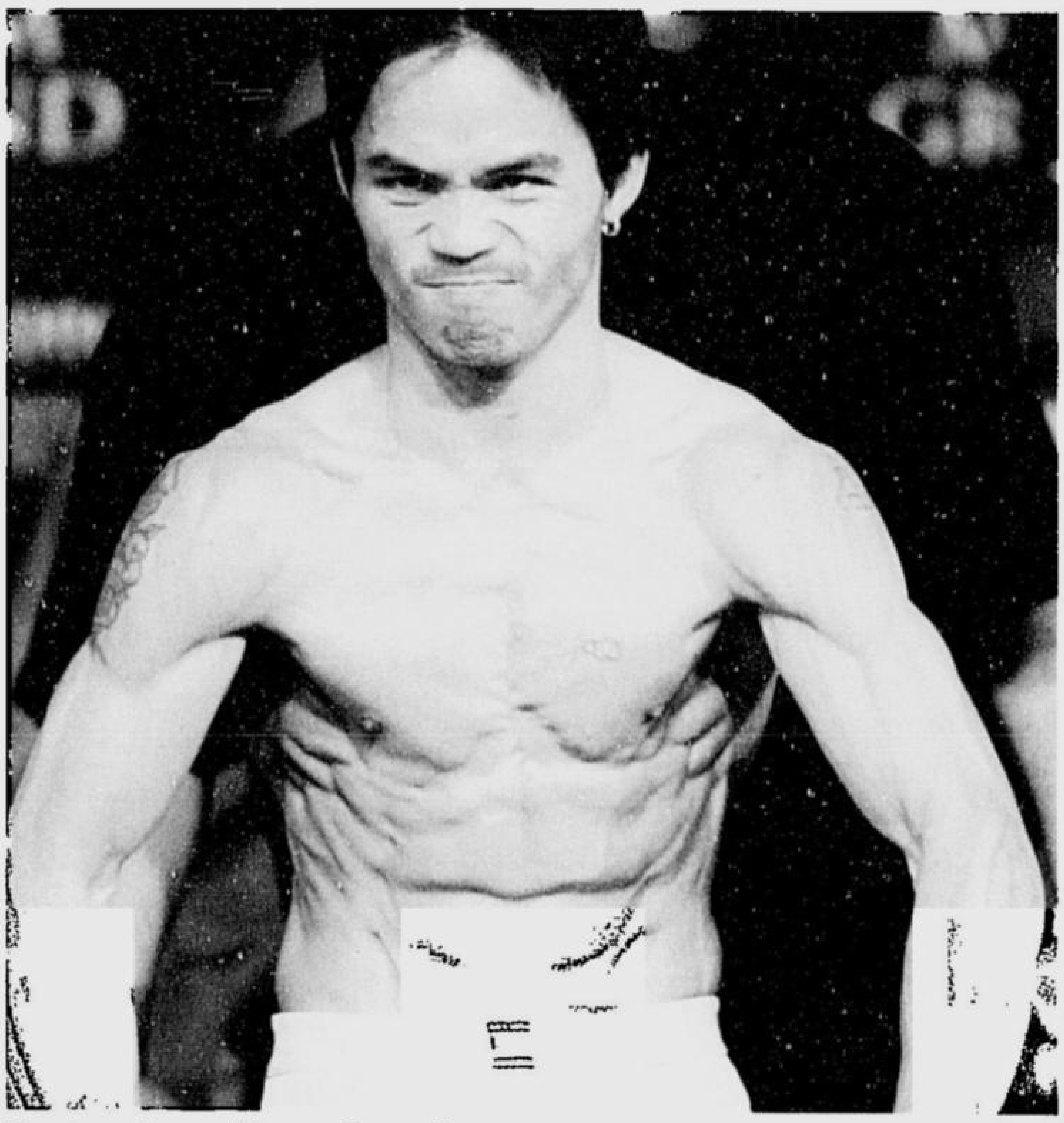
JANUARY

"We cannot arrest them and break the treaty unilaterally. That can become an unfriendly act with a country that is aligned with us."
- *Justice Secretary* **Raul Gonzalez,** *on how the arrest of four American soldiers accused of raping a 22-year-old Filipina could strain relations between the Philippines and the United States*

"Philippine sovereignty and criminal justice shall be upheld in all stages."
- *Foreign Secretary* **Alberto Romulo,** *asserting the Philippines' right to custody of the four American soldiers*

"I am the commander in chief … I prefer it to be by firing squad."
- *Former Iraqi strongman* **Saddam Hussein,** *on the possibility of him being found guilty of war crimes and executed*

"Justice Muñoz-Palma's death bereaves not only her family and the judiciary but also the entire Filipino nation to whom she has brought much honor and whom she has served so faithfully and well and with singular longevity, long after many of her contemporaries had faded away."
- *Chief Justice* **Artemio Panganiban,** *on the death of former Justice Cecilia Muñoz-Palma at 92*



Boxing champ Manny Pacquiao

"It's like we are looking at the sky and see a good alignment of stars foretelling a bountiful harvest even though the crop lands are yet to be farmed."
- *Senator* **Manuel Mar Roxas,** *warning against being overly optimistic of the peso's recent strength*

"Bush, you must admit that you have been defeated in Iraq and that you are being defeated in Afghanistan and that you will soon be defeated in Palestine, with the help and strength of God."
- *al-Qaida number two* **Ayman al-Zawahiri,** *addressing US President George W. Bush on Al Jazeera*

"Napakadumi ng festival *na ito!* (This festival is so dirty!)."
- **Joel Lamangan,** *director of Regal Films' "Blue Moon," after losing the Best Director Award to Jose Javier Reyes at the Metro Manila Film Festival*

"The President should resign by June 30, 2007, and declare her plans whether to continue in office … by running as member of parliament. Obviously, that's a wish."
- *Former President* **Fidel V. Ramos,** *making a suggestion to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should the constitution be amended*

"But the President was elected to serve the country until 2010 and no one can take the mandate away from her except the sovereign people through constitutionally sanctioned means."
- *Press Secretary* **Ignacio Bunye,** *explaining why GMA was rejecting FVR's call to resign*

"The structure became brittle after the fire. This is to mitigate the effect of the load on the structure and to prevent any accidents."
- *Metropolitan Manila Development Authority official* **Angelito Vergel de Dios,** *on the partial closure of the Katipunan Flyover after a fire gutted its base*

"That is false. The ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs has no vested interests in the outcome of political events. We report those events but we do not take part in any way."
- ABS-CBN News and Current Affairs head **Maria Ressa,** *denying that politics had anything to do with the network's decision to axe "Magandang Gabi, Bayan," the long-running show of Vice President Noli de Castro*

"My suggestion to him is to go somewhere where he is wanted. I'm sure Vice President de Castro will have no problem finding a new home for 'MGB.' "
- Executive Secretary **Eduardo Ermita,** *on what the VP should do next*

"While US troops serving abroad should be granted protection by their country, they should not be handed blanket immunity for crimes they might commit."
- The San Francisco Chronicle, *warning the American government against placing the four soldiers accused of raping a Filipina above the law*

"I will always vote for the interest of the country, not for the interests of President Arroyo, De Venecia and Ramos."
- Senator **Richard Gordon,** *saying that no one can force Charter change on the Senate*

"The very legitimacy of the President's mandate remains under a cloud of doubt."
- Former President **Corazon Aquino,** *on her decision to boycott the Council of State meeting*

"They were supposed to be transferred but there was a discussion with the lawyer. There was a delay and so they had an opportunity to escape."
- Philippine Army chief Lt. Gen. **Hermogenes Esperon Jr.,** *commenting on the escape of four junior Army officers who escaped custody. The four officers were being tried for their alleged participation in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny*

Morales meets Pacquiao

"The jab will be there, no matter what they say they will do, only it will be twice."
- Mexican boxer **Erik Morales,** *saying that he's too good to be beaten by Pacquiao in their upcoming rematch*

"I don't care if it's by decision or by knockout, I need to win."
- Manny Pacquiao *on the eve of his rematch with Morales*

"We got e-mails and phone calls from major companies like Miramax, New Line, the Weinstein Brothers and Sony Classics."
- Raymond Lee, *producer of* "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," *the first Filipino film to be screened at the Sundance Film Festival in Colorado*

"He was a genius."
- Broadcaster **Cesar Kuya Cesar Nucum,** *on the death of immensely popular "Knowledge Power" radio host Ernie Baron at 65*

"I could see that he was having trouble taking my punches. I had no problem taking his."
- A victorious **Pacquiao,** *avenging his loss to Morales with a 10-round stoppage*

"Love is free; it is not practiced as a way of achieving other ends."
- Pope Benedict XVI, *in his first encyclical "God is Love"*

"We recommend that the search for truth be relentlessly pursued through structures and processes mandated by law and the Constitution."
- The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, *on the need to investigate the "Hello Garci" controversy thoroughly*

FEBRUARY

"The lack of publication of respondent Meralco's amended application for the increase of its generation charge is ... fatal. By this omission, the consumers were deprived of the right to file their comments thereon."
- The Supreme Court, *declaring null and void Meralco's 13.27 per kilowatt hour increase because the public was not properly notified*

Pope Benedict XVI

"The Pope asks almighty God to grant solace to the injured and to those who are mourning the loss of their loved ones."
- The Vatican, *in a letter to the Bishop of Pasig, after 74 people died in a stampede to get into a taping of the ABS-CBN game show "Wowowee" at the Philsports Arena*

"She begged me to help her. But I couldn't do anything because people were stepping on me. I saw people stepping on her, too."
- Albert Herrera, *on seeing his mother Arsenia, 57, trampled to death*

"We did not expect this would happen. We just want to make people happy every day. We hope people understand that we just wanted to help."
- Willie Revillame, *host of "Wowowee"*

"What is important is that the newspaper that initially published the cartoons has apologized, and I would urge my Muslim friends to accept the apology, to accept it in the name of Allah the merciful, and let's move on."
- United Nations Secretary-General **Koffi Annan,** *pleading for calm after demonstrations in various countries by Muslims over a Danish newspaper's publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammad*

"They were exploited, manipulated and treated like animals."
- Interior Undersecretary for Peace and Order **Marius Corpus,** *on how show organizers treated the stampede victims*

"I am responsible and I will hold myself accountable should our justice system so determine in the future. There will be no whitewash. We will continue to work with the government and all its agencies."
- ABS-CBN CEO **Eugenio Lopez III** *in a televised message. He also expressed outrage at Corpus' statements.*

"It seemed like something that happened to other people, and here it was happening to me."
- Philippine-born **Pia Clemente,** *producer of the short film "Our Time is Up," which was nominated for an Academy Award*

"We should be worried about threats like terrorism, but we should also be worried about other more

important threats like the destruction of the environment."
- *Former American Vice President* **Al Gore,** *speaking on a visit to Manila*

"The EO has led to a constitutional crisis in the country, since the Senate has been checkmated in its committee investigations of questionable transactions and of possible criminal activity involving officials and military officers."
- *Senate President* **Franklin Drilon,** *on why the Senators were asking the SC to junk Executive Order 464, which effectively prevents government officials from appearing in congressional hearings without the President's say-so*

"It is inexcusable for our high officials in the land to talk about small plans, scattered plans, diminishing plans, as if it is an event that should be slowly, gradually and steadily forgotten."
- **FVR,** *criticizing the government's decision to hold low-key celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of the 1986 Edsa Revolution*

GMA makes a point

"I am happy that we are removed from the priority watch list of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) violators. This is recognition of our relentless effort to stamp out piracy in the country."
- **GMA,** *hailing the Office of the US Trade Representative's removal of the Philippines from its priority watch list*

"The earth swallowed them up. It was as though the barangay had disappeared from the map."
- *Southern Leyte Rep.* **Roger Mercado,** *describing the mudslides that covered the village of Guinsaugon. Hundreds were feared dead.*

"The winner is Filipino fashion."
- **Pia Clemente,** *after announcing that she will be wearing a gown by Rajo Laurel to the Oscars*

"It's very low, your honor."
- *Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen.* **Generoso Senga,** *answering Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's question as to the chances of a coup d'etat after blasts occurred at Malacañang and Makati*

"And let me make this clear: I believe that I am the best person to lead the nation through this transition."
- **GMA,** *speaking to foreign correspondents about the possible transition to a parliamentary form of government*

"That's just one person's opinion."
- **FVR,** *reacting to GMA's statement*

"There is a sense of urgency that the political crisis has to be resolved at the soonest time possible because the constitutional venues for resolving this crisis are narrowing down and we don't want to be left with extra-constitutional alternatives."
- *Former Agrarian Reform Secretary* **Florencio Butch Abad,** *on the need to end the country's political deadlock*

"All of us have to offer something for the country."
- **Cory Aquino,** *on her decision to lead the march down Ayala Avenue to revive the flagging spirit of People Power*

"This is my warning to those plotting against the people. For your treachery, the full force of the law will fall on you."
- **GMA,** *announcing a state of emergency through Proclamation No. 1017*

"If they (the news groups) do not follow the standards—and the standards are if they would contribute to the instability in the government (or) if they do not subscribe to what is in General Order No. 5 and Presidential Proclamation No. 1017—we will recommend (a takeover)."
- *Philippine National Police Director-General* **Arthur Lomibao,** *warning that the police may take over media institutions who step out of line during the state of emergency*

"Before my support for her was waning. Now it is waning and waning. It's like before it was X, now it's double X. So what is next?"
- **FVR,** *describing his support for GMA*

"While we respect the right and the power of the President to protect the people and the state from any destabilizing force, the best interest of the greater number of Filipinos must be borne in mind."
- *VP and former media man* **De Castro,** *protesting the issuance of Proclamation No. 1017*

"*Kalokohan ito* (this is foolishness)."
- *Party-List Rep.* **Crispin Beltran,** *after being arrested on charges of rebellion*

An all-out Rustom Padilla

"I reached a point where I realized I had a different personality. I realized I was gay. Now I'm telling you, and telling the whole world—even if it's difficult because I'm not a bad person."
- *Former matinee idol* **Rustom Padilla,** *admitting that he was gay on "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition"*

MARCH

"I am happy to report that the cabal is broken and it is time to get back to the real business of governing. I am confident that order has been restored."
- **GMA,** *lifting the state of emergency*

"If (the administration) would say that we'd no longer be arrested once we leave the House of Representatives, then we may start to believe that the situation is already normal."
- *Bayan Muna Party-List Rep.* **Teddy Casiño,** *one of the so-called "Batasan 5" congressmen, who had been holed up at Congress because of an arrest order against them*

"I urge the Supreme Court to decide on the petition on the merits, rather than consider them moot and academic. If these things continue, then you know the media and freedom of the press may become academic at a certain point."
- **Drilon,** *asking the SC to rule on the legality of Proclamation No. 1017 despite GMA's lifting of the said state*

"But I have great faith in God's will. I believe that I am here now because that is the plan of God for me and for us. As long as I am here, I will do what is best for our country."
- **GMA,** *saying that her*

presidency was part of God's plan for the Philippines

"This arrest is veritable proof that despite the lifting of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, the President is bent on violating civil liberties to silence those who simply wish to have the truth exposed."
- *Akbayan Party-List Rep.* **Risa Honitveros-Baraquel,** *after she was bodily carried to a police vehicle while attending an assembly for International Women's Day*

"She was a fantastic role model. She had a career but she was also active at home, like she even had time to sew our school uniforms."
- *Broadcast journalist* **Cheche Lazaro,** *on the passing of her mother, Filipina pioneer Estefania Aldaba-Lim at 90*

"It is a pity he didn't live to end of his trial to get the sentence he deserved,"
- *Croatian President* **Stipe Mesic,** *on the sudden death of former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic at the Hague, where he had been on trial for genocide*

"We cannot keep sweeping disloyalty under the rug. We cannot even allow disloyalty to face the rug with a few pushups."
- **GMA,** *speaking at the Philippine Military Academy graduation rites*

"The old-time politicians of the status quo better stand back because the train has left the station. It is time for the politicians to stand back or get run over."
- **GMA**, *endorsing the controversial people's initiative for Charter change*

"I want to change society."
- *Bar topnotcher* **Joan de Venecia** *of the University of the Philippines College of Law. She is also the niece of Speaker Jose de Venecia.*

APRIL

"The Cha-cha train would not run over those who oppose it. Instead, it would be derailed because it is a runaway train with rogue passengers who get paid to ride but would be hurt when the train gets off the loose tracks."
- *Sen.* **Joker Arroyo,** *on the chances of the Charter change campaign succeeding*

Former President Joseph Estrada

"That's a pack of lies."
- *Former President* **Joseph Estrada**, *on the accusations he raided the treasury for his own gains. He was testifying at the Sandiganbayan*

"I want to pee."
- *Actress* **Keanna Reeves** *upon being named the winner of ABS-CBN's "Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition"*

"I won't deny it. My friends and I brought vote cards to support Bianca and Keanna. There's no rule against that."
- *Talent manager* **Boy Abunda,** *accused of buying votes for his talents Bianca Gonzalez and eventual victor Reeves*

"I did not conclude massive cheating, but there was cheating."
- *Election Commissioner* **Resureccion Borra,** *testifying before the Senate on the 2004 elections*

"It's her birthday today and I'd rather reserve my comment as far as that is concerned. Let her celebrate a happy birthday."
- **Estrada**, *on the occasion of GMA's 59th birthday*

"That 'Da Vinci Code' movie should be banned here."
- **Baby Lyn Tero**, *officer-in-charge of Original Samahang Nazareno, which stages a yearly senakulo in Pasig City*

"It just means that the process has not been formally completed. Mr. Poe remains a very strong contender."
- **Bunye**, *on the last-minute lobbying for the National Artists Awards. Among the contenders is movie icon and presidential candidate, the late Fernando Poe Jr.*

"As we celebrate and rejoice in Jesus' resurrection, I wish to announce that we are changing our policy on those who have been imposed the death penalty. We are reducing their penalty to life imprisonment."
- **GMA**, *commuting all death sentences*

"If it's a sweeping commutation, it's shocking and condemnable."
- **Dante Jimenez**, *founding chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, reacting to GMA's action*

"Today, even in this modern age marked by anxiety and uncertainty, we live the event of the resurrection, which changed the face of our life and changed the history of humanity."
- **Pope Benedict XVI**, *delivering his first Easter Sunday message*

"Congress undoubtedly has a right to information from the executive branch whenever it is sought in aid of legislation. If the executive branch withholds such information on the ground that it is privileged, it must so assert it and state the reason thereof and why it must be respected."
- **The Supreme Court,** *declaring Executive Order 464 partially void*

"The only winner here is justice."
- **Panganiban**, *on the SC rejection of EO 464*

"*Patalsikin si* (oust) GMA."
- **Maria Theresa Pangilinan,** *shouting during her graduation at the Cavite State University, where GMA was commencement guest*

"I've forgiven them. I am a Christian. I read the Bible three times a week."
- **Estrada**, *on having forgiven those who had a part to play in his ouster*

"Chat kept her illness a secret to avoid a media circus. Also, she didn't want the public to see her in such a state."
- *Fashion designer* **Renee Salud,** *on the death of his friend, beauty queen Chat Silayan, of cancer at only 46*

"The so-called calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy has no place in our legal firmament and must be struck down as a darkness that shrouds freedom."

- **The Supreme Court,** *voting 13-0 in declaring unconstitutional the government policy to disperse antigovernment rallies without permits*

"My feeling is that not even in my wildest dreams did I expect to be placed in this stand—from President to prisoner."
- **Estrada,** *almost coming to tears while bitterly speaking out against ex-Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson during Estrada's Sandiganbayan trial*

"It will be the same draft, it will have the same basis, and the President will have the same powers."
- *Presidential Chief of Staff* **Michael Defensor,** *warning that GMA may impose Proclamation No. 1017 again if the militant groups mobilizing for Labor Day rallies threaten the government.*

"He left us with good memories. I think we are very fortunate to have him."
- **Jody Stewart,** *son of television pioneer Robert "Uncle Bob" Stewart. Stewart died in Arizona but was cremated, his ashes interred at Loyola Memorial Park. Stewart founded GMA Network Inc., in 1950.*

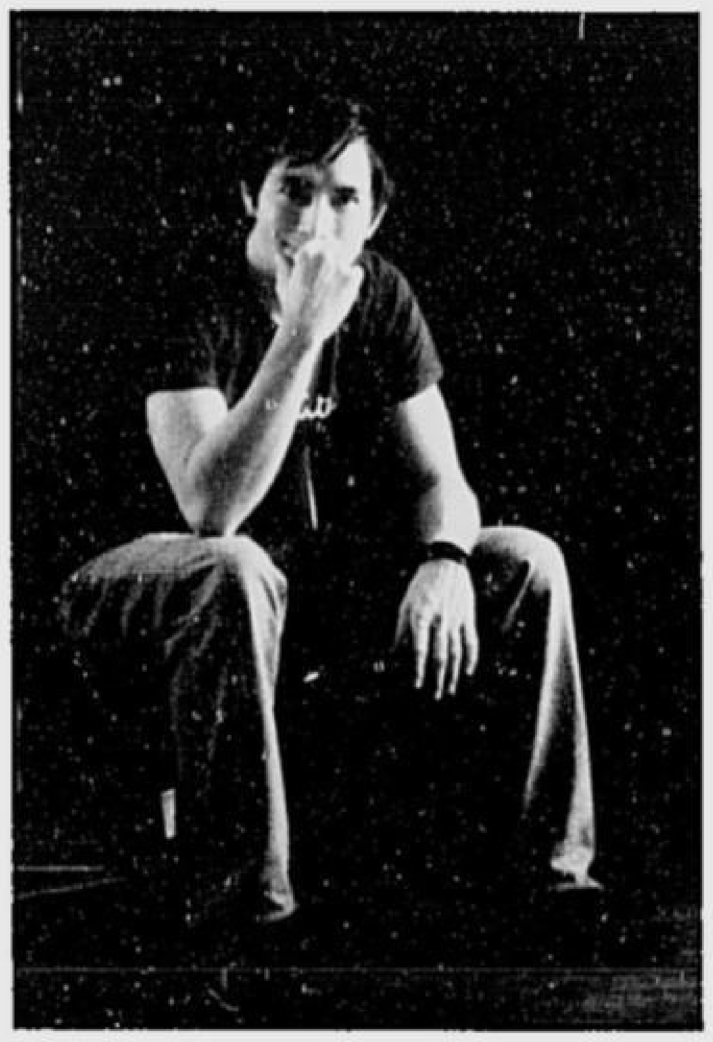
MAY

"We're calling you as representatives of our people … And if you don't want it, the hell with you!"
- *Sen.* **Juan Ponce-Enrile,** *after Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila, and Internal Revenue Commissioner Jose Bunag snubbed a senate hearing*

"Happy birthday, Ma, *si* Joseph *ito."*
- Former President **Joseph Estrada**, *during his emotional homecoming for his mother's' 101st birthday*

"This court rules that the assailed PP1017 is unconstitutional insofar as it grants President Arroyo the authority to promulgate 'decrees.' "
- **The Supreme Court**, *ruling on PP1017*

"I think Manila has broken the world Guinness record for simultaneous breastfeeding."
- *Dr.* **Nicholas Alipui** *of Unicef, after 3,738 mothers held a mass breastfeeding at the San Andres Sports and Civic Center in Malate*



Rivermaya's Rico Blanco

"This one is for the Philippines."
- *Lead singer* **Rico Blanco,** *after the band Rivermaya won an MTV Asia Award as favorite artist*

"People like me can take positions of leadership … we have never lost our rights because of our condition."
- **Hilarion Guia,** *former leper and mayor of Culion, who led the bid to turn the former leper colony into a town*

"Now we can breathe the free air."
- Rep. **Liza Maza,** *after the Batasan 5 was finally able to go home after 70 days*

"If they will denounce the NPA and the armed struggle, everything will be easier."
- *Chief of Staff* **Mike Defensor** *on the Batasan 5*

"I have no comment, I already have too many enemies."
- **Chavit Singson,** *when asked to comment on Rep. Mikey Arroyo's* jueteng *links*

"Abortion is just wrong. Babies don't deserve to die."
- **Salvacion Ruiz,** *who adopted abandoned baby Sandin Lee despite the fact that she only makes P50 a day and lives in Tondo*

"Even if they say I need a psychiatrist, what's important is I know my law."
- Justice Secretary **Raul Gonzalez,** *assuring the media that his kidney illness would not affect his government service*

"The Philippine eagle has landed."
- **Leo Oracion,** *the first Filipino to climb Mt. Everest, upon reaching the summit*

"The film made erroneous and unsubstantiated claims against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity."
- *Manila Councilor* **Benjamin Asilo,** *after the city banned the showing of the film "The Da Vinci Code"*

"I don't believe in retiring."
- **Fr. James Reuter**, *Jesuit priest and honorary Filipino, on his 90th birthday*

"I just wanted to have fun with friends. It was a party, not politics."
- PCGG Commissioner **Ricardo Abcede,** *explaining why one of the guests at his birthday party was former First Lady Imelda Marcos*

"I'm living the American Dream!"
- **Taylor Hicks,** *after being chosen the 2006 American Idol*

"You couldn't really avoid bullets because bullets couldn't distinguish foreigners."
- **Adelyn Pascual,** *returning OFW, after escaping the violence in East Timor*

"Her last words were 'Daddy, daddy.' "
- **Poniran**, *a survivor of the killer earthquake in Bantul, Java, Indonesia, whose five-year-old daughter died in his arms as he waited for treatment in a hospital*

"Yes it is something to worry about, not with a sense of panic but concern, so that we can prepare for a big earthquake in advance."
- *Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) head* **Renato Solidum** *Jr., saying that the big earthquake in Central Java could also happen in the Philippines*

The Everest Team's Art Valdez

"Everest is not a prize … You can climb a mountain only if the mountain lets you."
- **Art Valdez,** *head of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE), after Leo Oracion and Erwin Emata, the first and second Filipinos to summit the mountain, returned home to claims that another Pinoy, Dale Abenojar, got there first*

"Is the government out to kill us?"
- Bayan Muna Rep. **Satur Ocampo,** *after the killing of ex-communist leader Sotero Llamas, another in a series*

of violent murders of leftist leaders

JUNE

"I am still president, for I have not resigned. I am very much alive."
- Former President **Joseph Estrada,** *in his seventh appearance before the Supreme Court in June*

"Don't smoke, that's a beauty secret."
- Dr. **Encarnita Limpin** *of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Alliance, promoting an antismoking campaign*

"If growth must directly impact the poor, we have to do more."
- **GMA** *after the economy reportedly grew by 5.5 percent*

"It is better to light a candle for responsible mining than just to curse darkness for past environmental sins."
- **Banner** *at a prayer meeting in the Albay Astrodome organized by the Lafayette Group in support of mining activities in Rapu-Rapu Reef, Albay. The mining had already resulted in spills, causing significant environmental damage*

"Government has no policy to harm or kill its citizens."
- Interior and Local Government Secretary **Ronaldo Puno**, *assuring the Batasan 5 that the government is not behind the killings of leftist leaders*

"This is a shame and a sham."
- Archbishop **Oscar Cruz** *on the government's inability to do anything about the killings*

"It's not our fault. We only received the caskets."
- Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) deputy administrator **Angelo Jimenez,** *after the bodies of two OFWs killed in Saudi Arabia were interchanged and sent to the wrong families*

"When a woman is raped, her character would have nothing to do with it. Even one who's into prostitution has a right not to be raped."
- *Private prosecutor* **Evalyn Ursua,** *after witnesses confirmed that Nicole was drunk when she was allegedly loaded into a van and raped by American servicemen in Subic*

"The decision is whimsical and capricious."
- *Rep.* **Crispin Beltran**, *after he was indicted on charges of rebellion*

"We just never complain. Whatever resources we have, we maximize, stretch them to the limit."
- *Marikina Mayor* **Marides Fernando,** *after Marikina was ranked no. 1 among local LGUs by the Asian Institute of Management and the Ford Foundation*

"I cried a lot of times ... I knew there was a chance that Leo and I would not make it back alive."
- Second Filipino Everest conqueror **Pastor Emata,** *revealing how he and fellow climber Leo Oracion had signed documents stating that their bodies should be left on the mountain if they died during their attempt*

"She's wholesome and very pleasant. She smiles a lot."
- *"Pinoy Big Brother" director* **Lauren Dyogi** *on Kim Chiu, winner of the show's Teen Edition*

"We as a country cannot allow this to continue if we are to build a foundation for development, growth and equity."
- *Former Education Secretary* **Juan Miguel Luz,** *after studies revealed that Filipino students' learning test scores were way below average*

"As far as we're concerned, it's a dead issue."
- *Press Secretary* **Ignacio Bunye**, *irked by continuous questioning by reporters on the "Hello, Garci" issue*

"Zoos claim to educate people and preserve species, but they fall short on both counts ... they only present us with a distorted view of wildlife."
- **Jamie Alarcon,** *spokesperson of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animal (PETA), after the group staged a protest in front of the Manila Zoo*

"They are afraid to hear the voices of the victims ... Why weaken the law? If you weaken the law you strengthen the criminals."
- **Dante Jimenez** *of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC), after the abolition of the death penalty*

FPJ's widow Susan Roces

"I cannot in all conscience go through the motions of the awarding ceremonies, just for public display."
- **Susan Roces,** *in a letter to Cultural Center of the Philippines president Nes Jardin, on why she was not attending the awarding rites for national artist. Her husband, the late screen icon and GMA's opponent in the presidential race, Fernando Poe Jr., was posthumously named National Artist for Cinema*

"You know Mrs. Arroyo, she will do anything to have a photo with Susan to show the world that all is well between them."
- **Marichu Vera-Perez,** *supporting the decision of FPJ's widow*

"They may be considered to be a victim of wrongful violence."
- Justice Secretary **Raul Gonzalez,** *on the fact that the family of the late Leo Echegaray could be entitled to compensation for the "judicial error" of a death sentence*

"Why? Will it change anything? Will they be able to bring him back?"
- Echegaray's sister **Leonor Echegaray**

"Was there massive cheating? Why, yes! There was cheating, and definitely the beneficiary was the cheater."
- *Sen.* **Rodolfo Biazon,** *after a Senate Committee's initial findings revealed that there were indeed anomalies during the 2004 elections*

"If Senator Biazon has nothing sensible to say, he should just shut up."
- *Surigao Rep. (and rabid GMA supporter)* **Prospero Pichay**

"Being illiterate, Madulin did not know the importance of said letters and failed to inform respondents of their existence."
- Motion filed by **Eddie and Annabelle Gutierrez** *and their daughter* **Ruffa Gutierrez-Bektas**, *claiming that their maid did not tell them about the letters sent by the BIR regarding their tax liabilities*

"This is good. We're going all-out now."
- Maj. Gen. **Jovito Palparan,** *announcing the expansion of anti-insurgent military operations in Central*

Luzon after GMA announced she was pouring P1 billion more into the effort.

The very quotable Sec. Raul Gonzalez

"You can't avoid collateral damage ... Sometimes there are bombings, and civilians might get hurt."
- Sec. **Raul Gonzalez** *on the war against insurgency*

"The value of this industry and its impact on the Philippine economy cannot be understated."
- **Rainerio Borja**, *head of the Contact Center Association of the Philippines, revealing that annual earning of local call centers will hit $7.3 billion by 2010*

"The congressmen just wanted to see the Pope."
- Secretary **Eduardo Ermita**, *explaining why GMA was accompanied by a huge delegation on her European trip last June. The trip including an audience with Pope Benedict XVI in Rome*

"We are awed by our friend Warren Buffett's decision to use his fortune to address the world's most challenging iniquities."
- **Bill and Melinda Gates,** *after Buffett announced that he was donating $37 billion to charity, most of it channeled through the Gates Foundation*

"Simon says, touch your genitals."
- A **game** *that teaches sex education in the pilot Enhanced Population Education Module of the DepEd that had critics fuming*

JULY

"I'm a victim of circumstances."
- Comelec Commissioner **Resurreccion Borra** *on charges against him for an anomalous P1.3 billion computerization contract*

"You can't do anything wrong if you're fighting evil."
- Former Ambassador **Roy Señeres,** *admitting he encouraged Gen. Danilo Lim to withdraw support from the GMA administration*

"We really wanted to win and in the end, we made it."
- Italian defender **Fabio Grosso,** *who kicked in the deciding penalty shot that led Italy to a World Cup victory*

"Don't tell too many people, please."
- **Marke Lowen** *of Vanuatu Online, after the island was declared the happiest place on earth*

"Bishops are not that cheap."
- Bishop **Ramon Villena** *of Bayombong, on reports that bishops were handed envelopes of money during a Malcañang "victory" dinner after the prelates did not support impeachment efforts against GMA*

"Gaming is the greatest danger to young people that has ever come along."
- **Keith Bakker,** *addiction expert, who runs Europe's first clinic for online game addiction in Amsterdam*

"What they have to do is get Syria to get Hezbollah to stop doing this sh-t and it's over."
- US President **George Bush** *caught using the expletive with the mike on, speaking to British Prime Minister Tony Blair during the G-8 summit*

"I don't think our resources are scarce. I think it's more a matter of how the government uses these resources."
- Fr. **Agustin Advincula**, *the only Filipino priest in Lebanon, in reaction the government's claim that it lacked the resources to evacuate all the OFWs in the embattled country*

"I can't imagine a president speaking to the people and being guarded by the police from her own people."
- Sen. **Aquilino Pimentel,** *on the tight security during GMA's July 25 State of the Nation Address (SONA)*

"I don't want it said in the end that I defeated my enemies."
- **GMA** *in her SONA*

"I'm lucky that they didn't get tired of me."
- Actress **Gina Pareño**, *on her career renaissance after the independent film she headlined, "Kubrador," was widely acclaimed in the international film festival circuit*

AUGUST

"My first reaction was disbelief. My second reaction was hope."
- Cuban American **Armando Tellez,** *celebrating news that an ailing Fidel Castro had ceded power*

"We were really treated like paupers."
- OFW **Darren Legaspi,** *on the harsh treatment some Filipinos experienced under their Lebanese employers*

"I will remain a resident of this city. I was born here and my family lives here."
- Boxing champ **Manny Pacquiao,** *talking about his home city, General Santos, when asked whether he was planning to relocate to Manila to run for public office*

Pre-victory (and blonde) Pacquiao

"I hope her illness is not that serious because we do not want to see her die. As far as I'm concerned, I only want her to resign."
- Sen. **Pimentel**, *on news that GMA was under medical treatment for a fatty liver*

"This was to be a simultaneous attack on multiple targets, targeting US-bound aircraft."
- **UK police official**, *speaking anonymously, on the terrorist plot they uncovered to blow up several aircraft en route to the US, resulting in the closure of major UK airports, including London's Heathrow*

"Life has been good to me."
- Tycoon **John Gokongwei,** *after donating his share in the family-owned Summit Holdings, worth about P10.25 billion, to educational charities, through the Gokongwei Brothers Foundation*

"The vessel that sank in Guimaras Strait in the Philippines is an ecological time bomb that may cause long-term and possibly permanent damage to the environment and livelihoods of people."
- **Greenpeace Southeast**

Asia

"We need help from anywhere, from everywhere, of any kind."
- *Guimaras Governor* **JC Rahman Nava**

"The response of Petron is very anemic compared with the magnitude of the problem."
- *Chief Supt.* **Geary Barias** *of the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council*

"I am declaring the Guimaras oil spill a national calamity."
- **GMA**

"I'm hurting because I didn't do anything wrong yet I'm being accused of so many things."
- **George Cordero**, *former president of the Philippine Nurses Association and owner of a nursing exam review center. Cordero was accused of paying P7 million to get advance copies of the tests from the Professional Regulation Commission*

"I don't know if the sex is better than it was 20 years ago, but the life is a lot better." - Playboy *founder* **Hugh Hefner** *on turning 80*

SEPTEMBER

"It is a toothless tiger without the power to subpoena, without the power to protect."
- *Former VP* **Teofisto Guingona Jr.** *on the Malacañang-created Melo Commission, which was tasked to investigate the extra-judicial killings of leftists and journalists*

"We are constrained not to entertain or give due course to the instant petition."
- **Commission on Elections**, *on thrashing the petition filed by Sigaw ng Bayan, calling for a people's initiative to amend the Constitution*

The fearless Eugenia Apostol

"To be beholden to any news source is tragedy for a reporter. To be beholden to any advertiser is tragedy to a newspaper … The main job of a newspaper is to be a watchdog, not to be anybody's lapdog."
- *INQUIRER founding chair* **Eugenia Duran Apostol**, *on receiving her Ramon Magsaysay Award for journalism, literature and creative communication arts*

"*Pinaglaruan nila ang buhay ng mga tao* (They played with the lives of people."
- *Office for Transportation Security chief* **Cecilio Penilla,** *on the reported breach of airport security carried out by an antiterrorism expert who said he had sneaked in bomb components into a domestic flight as part of a security test*

"That test never really happened."
- **Samson Macariola,** *security consultant to Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, denying he had carried out a security test of domestic flights involving live bomb materials*

"Those leftists always blame me. They have to show evidence against me or any other Armed Forces of the Philippines officers or personnel."
- *Maj. Gen.* **Jovito Palparan** *on the claims of human rights advocacy group Karapatan that he was responsible for 136 cases of human rights violations during his 11-month stint as commander of the 7th Infantry Division in Central Luzon*

"He died doing what he loves best, and left the world in a happy and peaceful state of mind. Crocs rule!"
- **Producer John Stainton** *on television environmentalist Steve Irwin's death. Australia's Crocodile Hunter, known for his enthusiastic handling of some of the world's deadliest wildlife, died after being stung by a stingray while doing an underwater docu in the Great Barrier Reef off the Australian coast*

The much-missed Steve Irwin

"My mother has a solid vote in the depressed areas of Manila. *Sa* Dagat-dagatan *lang sa* Tondo, *malamang ma-zero sila sa Nanay ko.*"
- **Rep. Imee Marcos** *on the electoral chance of her mother, former First Lady Imelda Marcos, who will reportedly file her candidancy as mayor of Manila against incumbent Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna, Mayor Lito Atienza's son Ali, businessman Mark Jimenez, Rep. Joey Hizon, and senators Alfredo Lim and Panfilo Lacson*

"I didn't feel anything."
- **Capt. Norberto Aguro,** *skipper of the MT Solar I tanker that sank off Guimaras Island and caused the worst oil spill in the country's history. Testimony before an inquiry board indicated that the triangular hole on the tanker which caused it to sink was caused by a container that fell off a cargo ship*

"It's what you call justice catching up."
- **Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.,** *on the arrest of former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante by US immigration authorities. Bolante slipped out of the country amid charges that he used P728-million in fertilizer funds for the election campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo*

"Might as well leave while at the top level."
- **Michael Schumacher**, *on retiring from the Italian Formula One races after bagging seven major titles in the sport*

"The Holy Father is very sorry that some passages of his speech may have sounded offensive to the sensibilities of Muslim believers."
- *Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal* **Tarcisio Bertone,** *amid mounting criticisms that Pope Benedict XVI's speech in his native Germany had used language that attacked Islam*

"They pelted me with bad eggs. Maybe those who threw them were bad eggs too."
- *Armed Forces Chief of Staff* **Hermogenes Esperon Jr.** *on being attacked by students from the University of the Philippines where he had delivered a speech in a forum*

OCTOBER

"Let this court be known throughout the nation and the world for its

independence, integrity, industry and intelligence."
- **Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban** *on the Supreme Court's decision to dismiss—despite pressures from Malacañang—the petition for a people's initiative to amend the Constitution, preparatory to a shift to the unicameral parliamentary system*

"Mr. President, the girls register with us because they want to be girl scouts and not boy scouts."
- *Letter to Boy Scouts of the Philippines president Jejomar Binay, from Girl Scouts of the Philippines acting national president* **Susan Locsin,** *deploring the BSP resolution that says it would now accept girls into the organization*

"I hope it will bring us more business."
- **Tessie Sy-Coson,** *on her inclusion in Fortune Magazine's list of the 50 Most Powerful Women in International Business. Sy-Coson, vice chair of SM Investment Corp. and the eldest daughter of retail magnate Henry Sy of Shoemart malls, placed 46th in the list and made it for the sixth consecutive year*

"Now we can move on."
-**Gringo San Diego,** *board topnotcher and one of 4000 new nurses on finally being allowed to take their oath, four months after allegations that leakages marred the latest nursing board exams*

"We are going to get poisoned here. We're sending them healthy bodies, doctors and nurses who will take care of their health, and what do we get? Poison."
- **Mimi Sison,** *chief executive officer of Green Initiatives Inc., on the Japan-Philippine Economic Pact Agreement (JPEPA), that would impose zero tariff on all products from both countries, including banned wastes from Japan*

"Everything that happened had something to do with Halloween. There were the ghost employees and we had a caretaker. What else is a caretaker but a *sepulturero*?"
- *Makati Mayor* **Jejomar Binay,** *on the 60-day temporary restraining order stopping the government from suspending him for alleged anomalies involving ghost employees*

"I was unable to resist orders, and I did something cruel."
- *Military doctor* **Akira Makino,** *saying that the Japanese Imperial Army performed secret medical experiments including vivisections on Filipino prisoners. There were reportedly between 30 to 50 victims*

"There is sufficient evidence indicating that in several cases ... the president carried out acts of rape, forced sexual acts, sexual acts without consent and sexual harassment."
-**Police statement** *recommending the indictment of Israeli president Moshe Katsav, who faces impeachment for the charges. Katsav has denied the allegations and vowed to clear his name*

"(The underground test was carried out successfully) with indigenous wisdom and technology 100 percent."
-**Pyongyang statement** *confirming that North Korea had performed its first-ever nuclear weapons test despite worldwide appeals and threats of sanctions*

"The killer toyed with him like a cat playing with a mouse."
-*Lawyer* **Rex Fernandez,** *a member of a fact-finding mission, describing how Aglipayan Bishop Alberto Ramento was stabbed to death inside his parish in Tarlac City. Ramento was an outspoken critic, hitting the Arroyo administration for the spate of extra-judicial killings of leftists and journalists*

"I felt sick to my stomach."
-**Fil-Am US Navy medic Melson Bacos,** *telling a US military court how seven Marines dragged an Iraqi civilian from his home and shot him in cold blood before covering up the brutal slaying. The killing, he said, had arisen from frustration over the reputed release of a "known terrorist."*

The inimitable Imelda Marcos

"I have survived 20 years of persecution. The truth has prevailed."
- *Former first lady* **Imelda Marcos,** *on being acquitted by an antigraft court on yet another case. Mrs. Marcos has at least 36 criminal and civil cases still pending before the Sandiganbayan and other courts.*

"We are not really happy with the decision. We want the mastermind."
- **Rynche Garcia Arcones,** *daughter of crusading journalist Marlene Esparat, on the life terms meted out to the three defendants who had confessed to the 2005 killing of Esperat because of her exposes on graft and corruption against Agriculture officials in Mindanao.*

"We share the concern of the export industry over the continued strength of the peso but, as a policy, we leave it to market forces to determine the true value of our currency."
-**GMA,** *to exporters who had warned that due to the rise of the peso against the dollar, they might not be able to meet the country's export earnings target of $50 billion. The peso has risen steadily since June because of strong remittance flows, substantial foreign investments and improving government finances.*

"I was the only Filipino in the airplane so it was all the more scary."
- **Jamie Liv Castillo,** *Philippine representative to the Miss Globe International 2006 beauty pageant, on being hijacked along with jet passengers, by a Turkish man who had demanded that a message be delivered to Pope Benedict XVI. The man later surrendered and freed all 113 people onboard unharmed.*

The relentless Miriam Santiago

"So in effect, there is no more future for these giant billboards; they will be taken down despite the pained objections of those earning money in that industry."
- **Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago,** *on the administrative order and the antibillboard blight bill she has authored, dismantling*

(continued on page 13)

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

				4	8	7	9	
								5
				7	3			4
						8		6
9		3				2		7
1		4						
6			4	1				
2								
	7	5	2	9				

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 12-31

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Answer to previous puzzle

9	7	6	2	1	4	3	5	8
3	1	4	5	8	9	2	7	6
5	2	8	3	7	6	1	4	9
8	6	1	4	3	2	7	9	5
7	9	2	8	6	5	4	3	1
4	3	5	7	9	1	6	8	2
2	5	9	6	4	3	8	1	7
6	8	3	1	5	7	9	2	4
1	4	7	9	2	8	5	6	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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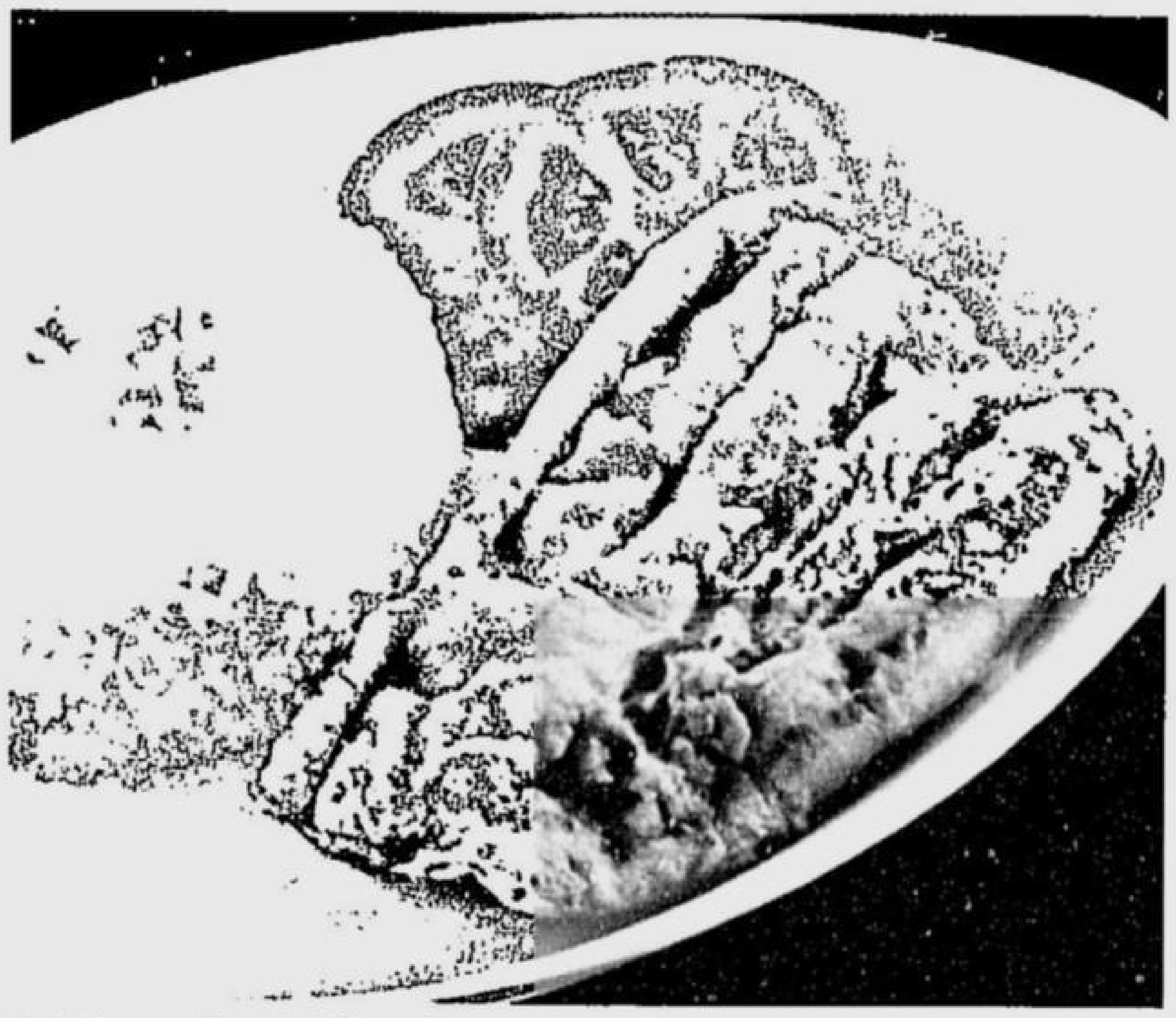
A good food year (from page 2)



Jollibee s bestselling Bangus Belly

Mindoro). Bottom line is, due recognition has been given to the Filipino palate, with increased sales as the reward gained by fast food chains for taking steps in this direction.

The New Slow Food

Since early this decade, hardcore foodies have embraced the slow food movement, going to great lengths to explore traditional Filipino cuisines and educating everyone about Filipino flavors by organizing festivals and tours and publishing books. This year, the Department of Tourism launched the Kulinarya Project, an ambitious endeavor that aims to standardize Filipino cuisine. The DOT, in cooperation with the Asia Society, has tapped noted food authorities Glenda Barretto of Via Mare, Margarita Fores of Cibo and Pepato, and Claude Tayag, among others, to create a standard recipe for famous Filipino dishes such as *adobo*. The objective of the project is to "set a standard for presentation and taste for a core set of Filipino dishes ... so that when a foreign businessman or a tourist tries Filipino food, he begins to recognize the taste and the look of a Bistek Tagalog so that he can order it and get the same dish at the next Filipino restaurant." With our many regions and even more variations of Filipino dishes, some have voiced their skepticism as to the feasibility of this project. A book is set to be released early next year that will give the "standard" recipe for select Filipino dishes. Well, who knows? It just might work.

Food Writers Unite

As Time Magazine named YOU this year's Person of the Year because of the individual's increased participation in the blogosphere, Menu is likewise recognizing the efforts of Filipino food bloggers everywhere. The Internet would be boring without such treats as those provided by the Marketman (marketmanila.com) or Lori Baltazar (dessertcomesfirst.blogspot.com), who have taken food blogging to new heights with their food essays, tried and tested recipes and amazing photos.

Inspired by these two, and encouraged by my wonderful editor *(That's it, feed my ego - Ed)*, my New Year's resolution is to create a food blog of my own to create space for the many pictures and other thoughts and essays that come with this job. The site url will be margauxlicious.blogspot.com. I'll start on it ... tomorrow!

Time to Pig Out

Meanwhile, Happy New Year! Here's to more eating and celebrations this 2007. After all, we are welcoming the Year of the Pig!

(from page 11)

the massive structures which caused deaths, damage to property and traffic chaos in the wake of Typhoon "Milenyo."

"There was grave abuse of discretion, amounting to lack of jurisdiction."
- Former Senate President **Jovito Salonga,** *on the Ombudsman resolution absolving Commission on Elections' chair Benjamin Abalos and other officials involved in the P1.3 billion poll automation deal. Salonga said the ruling was "an unthinkable reversal" of a Supreme Court decision that voided the Comelect's contract with Mega Pacific.*

"We were the underdogs in this championship but we were focused. We had the heart and desire to win."
-Coach **Pido Jarencio,** *on the UST Tigers' surprising capture of the UAAP's title in men's basketball after a 10-year drought. The Tigers beat Ateneo's top-seeded Blue Eagles in a classic 76-74 overtime play.*

NOVEMBER

"We will throw them into the Mactan Straits and let the sharks eat them there."
-Justice Secretary **Raul Gonzalez** *on how foreign protesters against the Asean summit would be treated should they disrupt the Cebu event next month.*

"He united the nation for one day."
- Press Secretary **Ignacio Bunye** *on Manny Pacquiao, whose second win against Mexican legend Erik Morales saw Filipinos of all political colors jam the streets in welcome.*

"It's subtle blackmail."
-Health Sec. **Francisco Duque** *on pressures from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, warning that the Philippines' tough position on the infant milk formulas "would have unintended negative consequences for investors' confidence." The Chamber has been resisting the international Milk Code which regulates advertising of infant formula and urges the use of labels warning against the ill-effects of bottle-feeding as compared to breastfeeding.*

Sen. Ping Lacson

"When it becomes extremely difficult to arrive at a decision … you turn to prayer and wait for a sign and take it as God's will."
-Sen. **Panfilo Lacson,** *saying that it's God will that he runs for mayor of Manila*

Rosebud on the rampage

"Ping Lacson made me decide to run … I can't allow him to win or even run."
- State witness **Mary Rosebud Ong,** *on her decision to run for Manila mayor. Ong has linked Lacson to illegal drugs and kidnap-for-ransom activities.*

"The way he played, he deserves to win this year."
- Ralf Souquet *of Germany, of Ronnie Alcano, who beat him to win the World Pool Championship and $100,000.*

"From sea to shining sea, the American people voted for change."
-California Democrat **Nancy Pelosi**, *on the overwhelming victory of the Democrats at the polls after a dozen years of Republican rule. The US vote was widely seen as a blow to the Bush policy in Iraq.*

"Aquino was the symbol of People Power and an inspiration to others around the world struggling against tyranny."
- Part of the writeup on President Corazon Aquino, *who was chosen as one of 60 Asian heroes chosen by Time Magazine in a special issue to celebrate its 60 years of publishing in Asia. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER founding chair and Ramon Magsaysay awardee Eugenia Duran Apostol, Inquirer editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc and pool champion Efren "Bata" Reyes were among those similarly honored in the issue.*

"Who will punish the Americans and their lackeys who have killed many more people than Saddam Hussein?"
- Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, *senior lawmaker in Pakistan, on the death verdict given Saddam Hussein, who was tried by the Iraqi judiciary for crimes against humanity. The sentence met with mixed reactions from a world divided by politics and opposing views on capital punishment.*

"2.9 million Filipino families found themselves with nothing to eat at one time or another in the third quarter of 2006."
- Part of the findings of a Social Weather Station survey *conducted from Sept. 24 to Oct. 2. The survey found that hunger was highest in Mindanao.*

"*Hindi ka ba marunong maghintay*? (Can't you wait?)"
- **Immigration officer** *to first daughter Luli Arroyo, who had gone up to him to ask why he had allowed a foreigner to jump the queue at the immigration counter of Manila's international airport. The officer had apparently failed to recognize Arroyo and was subsequently suspended while the incident was being investigated.*

DECEMBER

"It's about respect for Filipino women. It's about the dignity of the Philippines in the face of rich nations."
- Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, *spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, on the 40-year sentence meted out to Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, who was found guilty of raping a Filipino woman in Subic last year.*

"I couldn't believe it was my son!"
- Sally Buensalida *on the body found floating in Albay Gulf, one of the at least 800 casualties of Supertyphoon "Reming," which unleashed boulders and loosened mud from the slopes of Mt. Mayon. President Arroyo subsequently declared Bicol to be under a state of national calamity.*

"Why me? I am just a simple man making a living from what I do best—playing billiards."
- Efren "Bata" Reyes, *reacting to his being chosen as one of Time's 60 Asian heroes.*

"It was Christmas love."

-Candoni, Negros Occidental Mayor **Liberty Manzano,** *saying that the P20,000 each that President Arroyo had given her and other Western Visayas was not a bribe for their support of Charter change, but merely "a Christmas gift for us and our families."*

"I am irate. I am foaming at the mouth. I am homicidal. I am suicidal. I'm humiliated, debased, degraded ... I am nauseated."
- Sen. **Miriam Defensor Santiago,** *reacting to the news that she had been removed from the short list of candidates for Chief Justice of the Supreme Court*

"Participants should just carry the rosary."
- Henrietta de Villa, *former ambassador to the Vatican and chief organizer of the Catholic Church-led rally against Charter change, barring politicians from mounting the stage to prevent the Luneta rally from turning political.*

"He's a man of conscience, a man of valor, an independent man, a man of integrity."
- Akbayan Rep. **Etta Rosales,** *presenting a bouquet of flowers to Judge Benjamin Pozon, who had refused to return US Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith to US Embassy custody and had him detained at the Makati City Jail instead, despite pressures from the US government, and the the Justice and the Foreign Affairs departments. Pozon had earlier sentenced Smith to 40 years in jail, for raping a Filipina in Subic last year.*

"Manny, just give me a car."
- Mrs. **Dionisia Pacquiao** *to her son after he won $3-million when he defeated Mexican boxer Erik Morales and became World Boxing Council super featherweight champ. Her son gave her an almost brand-new Altis with a driver and security escort.*

SEA Games pride Joan Tipon

"*Si Presidente? Pasensya na sir, hindi ko na narinig, maingay kasi.* (The President? Sorry, sir, I couldn't hear her; it was too noisy.)"
- Boxing bantamweight gold medalist **Joan Tipon,** *to Manny Lopez, head of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Phils., on how he failed to hear and recognize President Arroyo's voice when she called to congratulate him for his gold. Tipon said he thought the person at the other line was a reporter from the network GMA 7.*

"I kept it as a souvenir because my employer is a famous celebrity in Hong Kong."
- Domestic helper **Preslynsaga Catacutan,** *who was sentenced to six months in jail for stealing pictures of pop star Jackie Cheung.*

Dodot Jaworski, survivor

"Blaming politics for what happened is a convenient excuse."
- Pasig Rep. **Robert Jaworski Jr.,** *urging police to investigate the explosion that ripped through his car. The explosion might have something to do with his head-on war with drug lords, the young congressman said.*

"I won't ever have to ride the tricycle on my way home again."
-Band vocalist **Maureen Marcelo,** *who was declared the first Philippine Idol. The Lucena native said she plans to buy a secondhand car with her cash winning of P1-million.*

"This criminal has departed without ever being sentenced for all the acts he was responsible for during his dictatorship."
- Human rights lawyer **Hugo Gutierrez,** *on the death of former Chilean President Augusto Pinochet, who overthrew the Socialist government of Salvador Allende in a US-backed coup in 1973, and was deemed responsible for the death, torture and disappearance of thousands of dissidents during his rule.*

"He needed a douse of cold water."
-INQUIRER columnist **Vic Agustin** *on why he threw a glass of water at activist Renato Constantino, who had lambasted the Charter change advocates at a pro-Cha Cha press conference. Constantino had described the House representatives as "a bunch of serial rapists" for abusing the 2004 elections and for its designs on the 1987 Constitution. Agustin's behavior led to a month-long suspension of his column in the Inquirer.*

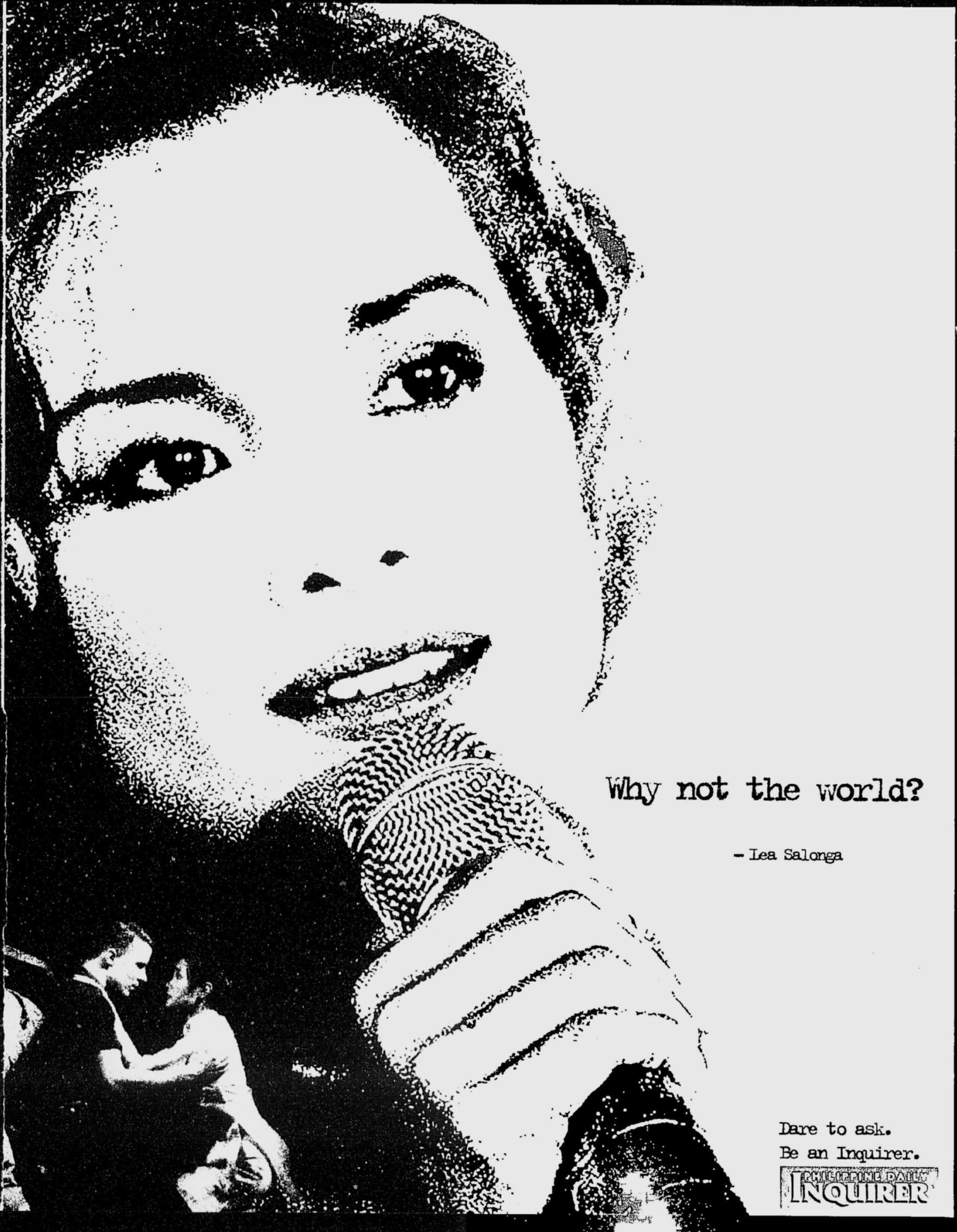
"We need more importantly and more urgently this educative and moral character change."
-Archbishop **Angel Lagdameo,** *president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, addressing the huge crowd during the rally against Charter change. Lagdameo spoke on the need for another form of Cha-Cha: not Charter change, but character change.*

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo

"If politics is show biz for ugly people, then journalism should be show biz for people who would rather remain invisible."
- Columnist **Rina J. David** *on the need for journalists to remain uninvolved in events they're covering. The column discussed media decorum in the wake of a water-throwing incident at a press conference involving a columnist and an activist.*

"By unduly giving honor to them, unrealistic expectations are generated."
- Luisa Imperial, *director of the Labor department's Institute for Labor Studies, warning against romanticizing overseas employment as it could lead to increased social costs.*

"Airports shouldn't have all these constant noise."
-**Patrick Francis,** *head of the Kuala Lumpur airport authorities, on how a "silent airport" could help airline passengers rest and relax before their flights.*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- Lea Salonga
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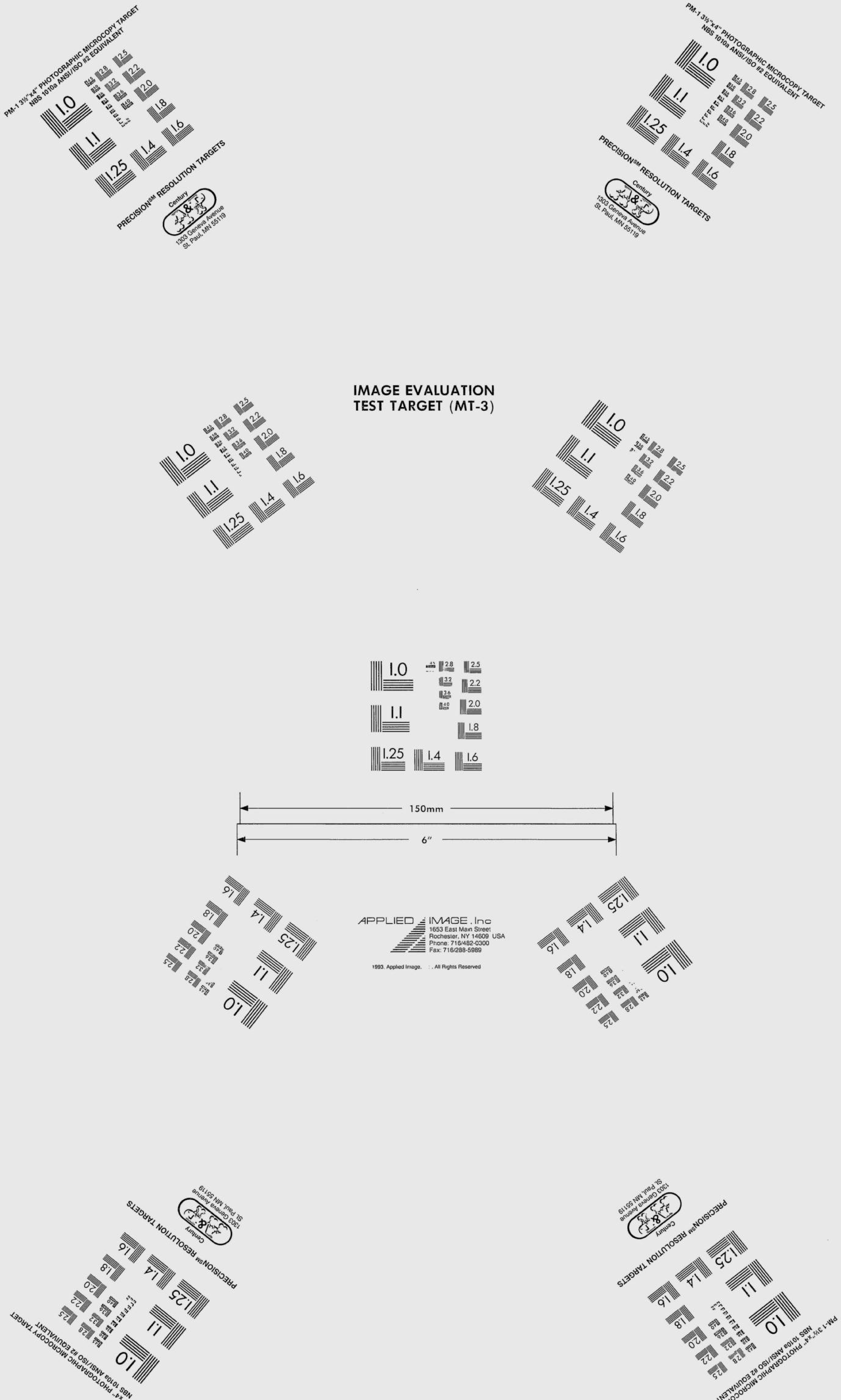
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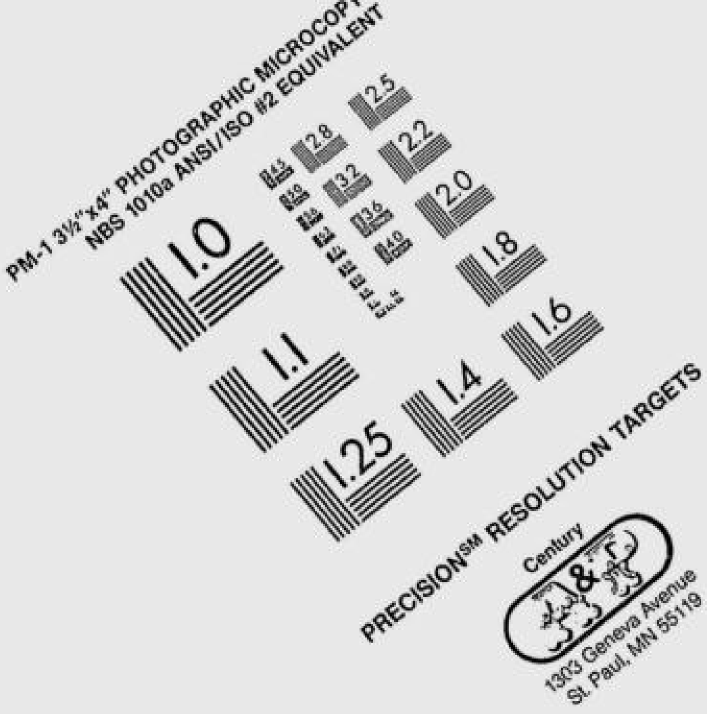
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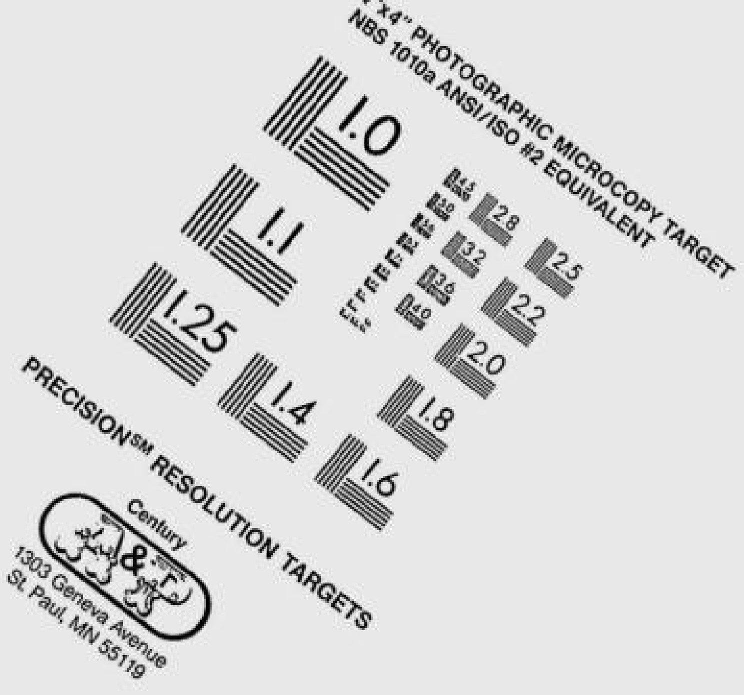
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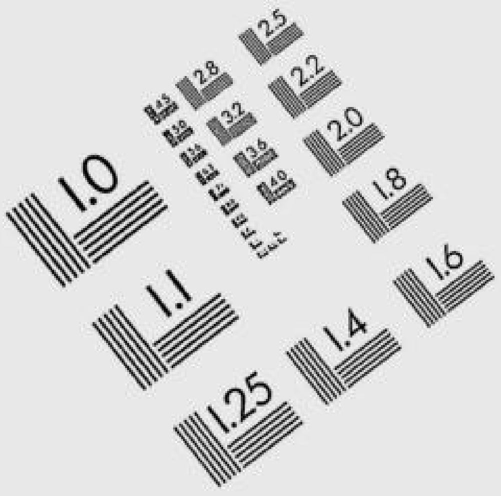
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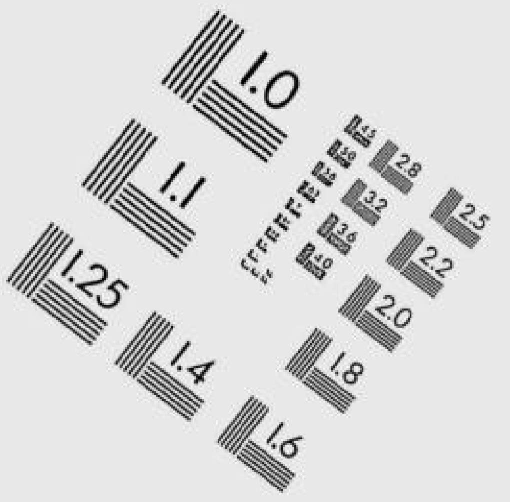
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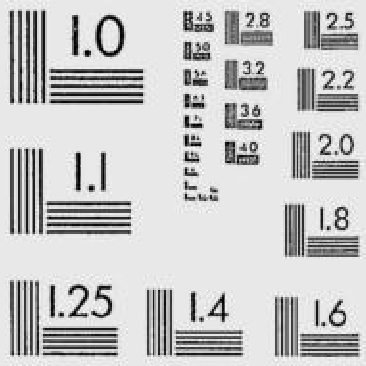
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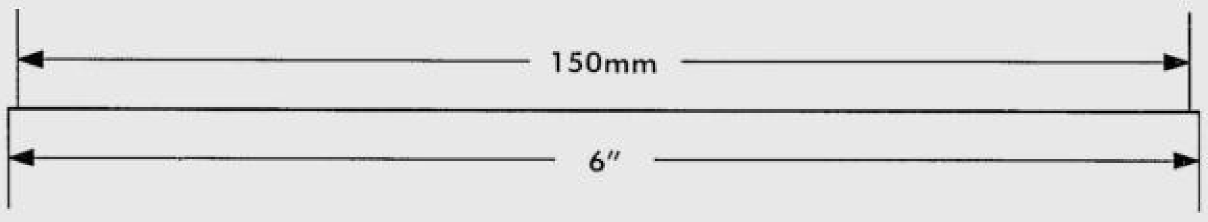

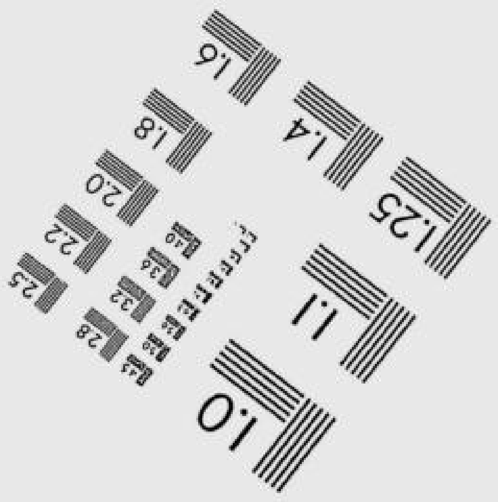
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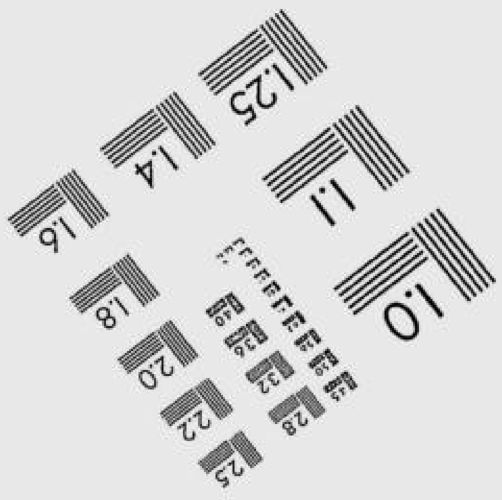
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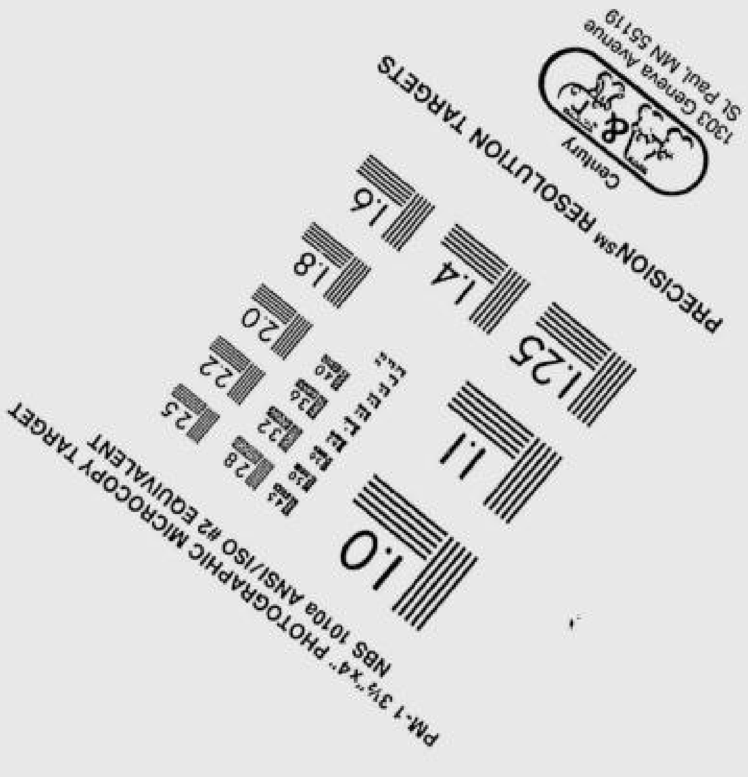
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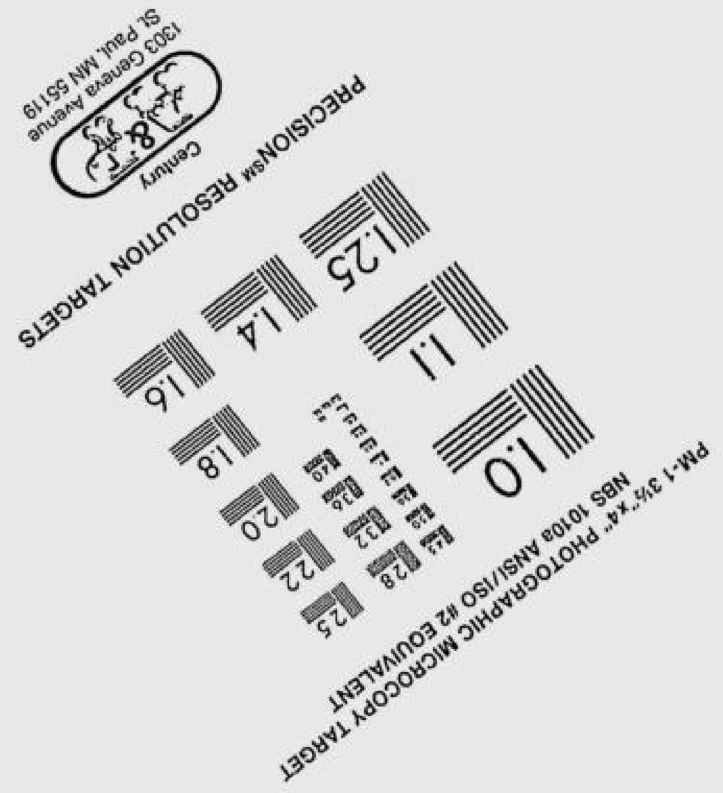
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